

THE YOUNG KENTUCKIANS SERIES

ON
GENERAL THOMAS'S
STAFF



BYRON A. DUNN

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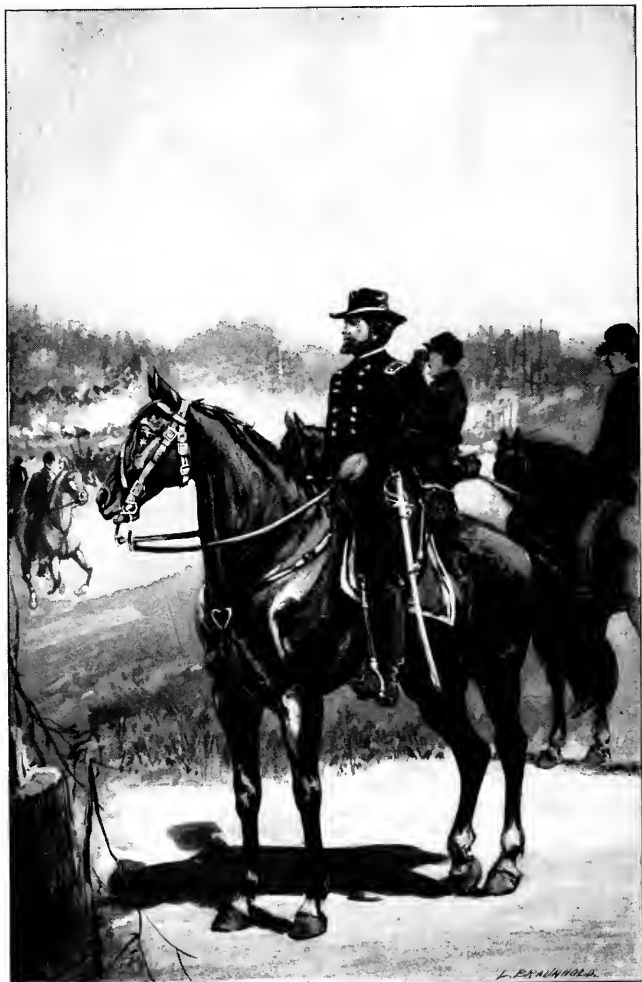
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ON GENERAL THOMAS'S STAFF



General Thomas sat on his Horse and watched the dreadful Conflict.

The Young Kentuckians Series

On General Thomas's Staff

BY

Byron A. Dunn

Author of "General Nelson's Scout"



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TO MY MOTHER

WHOSE GRANDFATHER GAVE HIS LIFE THAT THE UNION MIGHT BE
AND WHO IN 1861
SENT HER SON FORTH TO BATTLE THAT THE UNION
MIGHT BE PRESERVED
THIS VOLUME IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

INTRODUCTION.

IN the first book of this series, entitled "General Nelson's Scout," the author depicted the struggle in Kentucky during the first year of the war; in the book now offered to an indulgent public, the story is carried forward from the so-called siege of Corinth to that memorable charge which swept the heights of Missionary Ridge. The period embraced by this tale was, for the Union, one of the darkest in the Civil War. It was not until Vicksburg fell and Gettysburg was won that the clouds began to break and roll away.

History and fiction are here closely interwoven, and there is hardly an incident given that is not founded on fact.

The account of the death of General Nelson is as told by an officer who was close to one of the chief actors in the tragedy. The country never fully realized the great loss it suffered in Nelson's death. If he, instead of General Gilbert, had been in command of the center at Perryville, the history of that battle might have been different.

In General George H. Thomas we have one of

the grandest figures in the war, one that will grow brighter as the years go by. His modesty, his bravery, his patriotism, his nobleness of character, place him among the greatest of Americans.

The true character of General John H. Morgan as herein depicted is somewhat different from his reputation among the people of the North. He has often been pictured as little better than a guerilla. Instead, he was one of the most chivalric and gallant of the Confederate commanders.

In accounts of military movements and of battles, it has been the aim of the author to arrive as nearly as possible at the exact truth. To this end he has carefully searched the official records of the Rebellion, the several histories of the times, the numerous personal memoirs of commanders on both sides, and has also used his own personal knowledge, as well as the knowledge of numbers of his comrades. Many of the facts found in the chapter on Perryville were gleaned from the sworn testimony of witnesses before the Buell Military Commission.

B. A. D.

WAUKEGAN, ILL., June, 1899.

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ON GENERAL THOMAS'S STAFF.

CHAPTER I.

HOW CORINTH WAS BESIEGED.

"IT'S thundering; I guess it's going to rain."

These words were uttered lazily by a boyish-looking soldier who lay outstretched on a blanket under a tent-fly, which was pitched in the midst of a Southern wood. The day was very warm, and the hot rays of the sun shimmering down through the leaves of the trees gave the canvas the appearance of mottled silver. All through the woods, as far as the eye could reach, was stretched row upon row of white tents, sheltering a mighty army.

Again a dull, heavy roar came rolling sluggishly through the forest, as though it found hard work to penetrate the heated atmosphere.

"Sure, that's thunder," exclaimed the young soldier, raising his head from the saddle he was using for a pillow; and resting his body on one elbow, he listened intently.

"Whew! but it's hot," he continued. "I wish it would rain; don't you, Stewart?"

He spoke to a stolid-looking soldier, apparently

about twenty-five years of age, who sat on a cracker-box under the shelter of the tent, contentedly smoking a pipe. This man wore no blouse, and the collar of his woolen shirt was unbuttoned and thrown back, disclosing a brawny neck. He smiled at the question, but continued to smoke without answering.

"There! do you hear that?" exclaimed the boy, as the heavy roar once more came rumbling through the forest. "Now what do you say?"

"What in the world are you driving at, Hugh?" asked the soldier addressed as Stewart, somewhat tartly, as he knocked the ashes out of his pipe on the corner of the cracker-box.

"Look here," answered Hugh, "you need not get so uppish over a simple question, and don't knock your ashes in among the crackers. I don't mind a little seasoning once in a while, such as sand and the like, but I draw the line at stale tobacco. Bless me! if it isn't thundering again."

"Thundering, nothing!" growled Stewart. "It seems to me, Hugh, that you have heard those fellows barking often enough to recognize the sound. One would think you had never heard a cannon. Pope must be waking up the Johnnies."

"You don't mean to tell me that that is a cannon," cried Hugh, sitting up and feigning a look of the utmost astonishment. "Impossible!"

"Why impossible, smarty?"

"All that I have to say is, if that is cannon, I

wouldn't be in Pope's shoes for anything," solemnly answered Hugh.

"Why, you don't think the Johnnies will whip him, do you?"

"Oh, no! but won't Halleck be mad? He will arrest Pope, sure, if he happens to hit a Johnny."

Stewart burst out laughing. "Well, Hugh," he exclaimed, "you are a good one, but I don't know but you are about right. The old man would be raving if Pope should happen to bring on a general engagement. He says he isn't ready for one yet."

"Ready! ready!" retorted Hugh; "will he ever be ready? I tell you, Halleck makes me tired."

"Isn't there something in the army regulations about speaking disrespectfully of your superior officers? You had better be a little careful, young man."

"Fudge! the whole army, from Grant down, would be court-martialed if any notice were taken of what is said among ourselves. Growling is one of the dearest prerogatives of the American soldier, and woe be to the general who tries to take it from him. But hear that! Something is going to happen, certain, this time."

The roar of artillery had become more continuous, and sounded nearer.

"I think we had better be prepared for duty, Hugh," said Stewart, getting up and putting on his blouse. "An aide has just ridden up to General Nelson's headquarters."

"I am ready," exclaimed Hugh, rising and yawning. "Anything to break this monotony."

They had not long to wait. An officer came to tell them they were wanted, and as quickly as possible they presented themselves at headquarters. Orders were handed them to be delivered to the different brigade commanders. "And be spry about it," said the aide.

In a few minutes the clear notes of the "assembly" were ringing through the forest. The division fell in, and soon marched at quickstep toward the sound of the artillery.

John Stewart and Hugh Raymond were two of Nelson's orderlies. Stewart was the opposite of Hugh in temperament, being rather phlegmatic and stolid, and many were the pranks that the jovial-hearted boy played on him. Stewart took all of Hugh's pranks and bantering good-naturedly, and they were the best of friends. He was as brave as a lion and as true as steel, and Hugh could not have had a better companion.

Nelson's division was at this time a part of the mighty army which had gathered at Pittsburg Landing, under the command of General Henry S. Halleck, after the battle of Shiloh. Twenty miles away, at Corinth, lay the Confederate army under the command of Beauregard.

No finer or larger army was ever marshaled on American soil than the one commanded by General Halleck. It numbered over one hundred and twenty thousand as brave and gallant soldiers as

ever shouldered a gun. Under Halleck were such commanders as Grant, Sherman, Buell, Pope, Thomas, McPherson, and a host of others who afterwards distinguished themselves.

By a bold and rapid movement Halleck could have crushed Beauregard; but instead he crept along. A dozen shots in front would cause him to stop for hours, if not for days. He always seemed to be in a nightmare of fear of a Confederate attack. It took him a month to advance twenty miles. Such a burlesque, called a siege, was never before or since enacted in American history. It seems incredible that any general, with a modicum of military genius, could be the chief figure in such a farce. Yet this man was afterwards the chief military adviser of the government at Washington.

It is during this tedious advance on Corinth that our story opens. Hugh was by no means the only one disgusted with Halleck's manner of conducting the campaign. There was discontent among the soldiers, from Grant down.

On the 9th of May, General Pope threw forward two brigades into Farmington, a hamlet about five miles from Corinth. These brigades were attacked by a Confederate division, and it was the sound of this fight which brought forth the remarks of Hugh. Halleck, still fearing a general attack, ordered Nelson's division to the relief of Pope. Later, learning the cause of the fighting, he grew purple with rage, ordered Pope, who was about to reinforce his brigades, to halt, and at once

to order back the troops engaged in fighting. So, unsupported, the two brigades had to retreat, followed by an exulting and victorious enemy.

Nearly two hundred of Pope's men fell in this conflict, a sacrifice to Halleck's over-cautiousness and incompetency. As for Pope, he was sharply reprimanded, and was not allowed to advance a foot for days. It was not until the 20th day of May that he was allowed to occupy Farmington permanently. At the time of the battle of Farmington there was no less a personage visiting the army than the Honorable Thomas A. Scott, Assistant Secretary of War, and in surprise he asked Halleck why he ordered a retreat, instead of supporting his advance brigades.

"It might have brought on a general engagement," answered Halleck, "and that is what I would by all means avoid."

"Why are you so afraid of a general engagement?" asked the Secretary.

"On account of the strength of the enemy. An engagement might prove very disastrous."

The badly frightened Secretary rushed to the telegraph office, and sent the following dispatch to Washington:

"In my judgment, which is respectfully submitted for your consideration, a heavy reinforcement of infantry and artillery should be sent here immediately, or we shall soon be besieged, and that, too, in an enemy's country."

Thus the President's anxiety was increased, for at this time McClellan was loudly calling for

reinforcements from the Peninsula. Yet at the time Scott sent this telegram, Halleck had at least two men to Beauregard's one, and his army was in far better condition and much better armed.

When the fight at Farmington was over, Nelson's division was ordered back to its old camp. Hugh was beside himself with rage. He threw himself down on his blanket, and for a time, for a wonder, was silent. Stewart calmly lit his pipe and commenced smoking.

"Stewart," at length yelled Hugh, "why don't you say something? Why don't you swear? I would, if I dared. Great God! to see our poor fellows driven back—those howling Johnnies after them, and we not allowed to advance a foot. Is Halleck a coward, or a traitor?"

"Neither," answered Stewart, laconically.

"What is he, then?" fairly howled Hugh, beating the ground with both fists.

Stewart took his pipe from his mouth, sat a moment as in deep thought, and then said:

"I think—with all due respect to my commanding general—I think he is somewhat of an old fogey. He is conducting this siege, as he calls it, according to some musty military book written a century ago; and under the supposition that the Confederates will remain in Corinth and allow him to dig a trench all around them. Now, if the Rebs would remain in Corinth, Halleck would be all right; he would get them in time. But they won't stick. When the old man thinks he has them, they will be gone."

This was a long, a very long speech for Stewart to make. Hugh applauded by jumping up and slapping him vigorously on the back, yelling: "Good for you, old fellow, good for you! You ought to be promoted."

If Hugh could have heard what was said in General Nelson's tent he would have known that he was in good company. Several officers were present discussing the situation, and Nelson gave full vent to his temper.

"It's a shame," he growled, "a burning shame, to let such an opportunity pass. What we want is a battle. It is far better to meet the enemy in a fair fight on an open field, than it is to storm breast-works. We have men enough to eat them up."

"I don't know about that," spoke up an officer. "Halleck is fearful of a general engagement. He says the enemy is very strong and receiving reinforcements every day."

"Strong — receiving reinforcements every day!" roared Nelson. "Then why, in the name of Julius Cæsar, don't he attack them before they receive any more reinforcements? If we cannot whip them on an open field, how can we expect to whip them behind fortifications?"

"But," persisted the officer, "Halleck's idea is to besiege them, pen them up, and force them to surrender. He is already bringing up siege guns."

"Pen them up! bringing up siege guns!" sneered Nelson. "Why don't he bring three or four gun-boats overland? It would be as sensible. Of course,

Beauregard will allow himself to be penned up in Corinth like a pig! He will play with Halleck as long as he can, and then get out. I tell you the whole thing is a farce—a roaring farce.”

Here Nelson exploded, and went off in one of his fits of profanity, and the officer thought it best not to pursue the conversation any further.

The days went by, and Halleck’s army dragged itself along, foot by foot, like a great wounded snake.

If a shot was fired in front, Hugh would look wise and say to Stewart: “That means a week’s stop. I just bet Halleck is rushing around and yelling, ‘Don’t bring on a battle! don’t bring on a battle!’ He is big on the dig, though; he has the ground all dug up between here and the Landing.”

One of the most discontented men in the army was General Grant. In his orders Halleck had named Grant as second in command, but in reality he had little more to do with the army than the humblest private. A short time before the campaign closed, Grant came into Sherman’s tent looking unusually dejected. He sat for some time, smoking in silence, then said, abruptly, “Sherman, I am going to leave.”

“Leave?” asked Sherman, in surprise.

“Yes, leave; my luggage is all being packed. I go to-morrow morning. The fact is, Sherman, I can’t stand it any longer. The campaign is a farce, and I have borne all the snubbing I am going to. You ought to have seen Halleck’s look when

I suggested to him the other day that he could expedite matters a little. He treated me with utter contempt."

"General," said Sherman, earnestly, "don't leave. It will be your ruin if you do. Hold on a little longer. It will come out all right in the end. The outcome of this campaign will be that Corinth will be evacuated, this vast army divided, and you will come into your own again."

"Do you think so?" asked Grant, anxiously.

"I almost know so. For your own sake, for the sake of your country, reconsider your idea of leaving."

Sherman was so earnest that Grant wavered, and at last promised him he would postpone his going away for a time.

Thus the hero of Vicksburg was saved to the nation.

A snail will cover some ground if given time enough, and after a month of crawling Halleck had his army before Corinth. His siege guns were mounted and ready to open fire. The belief that the enemy was receiving reinforcements and might attack him still haunted him. Heavy trains were heard rumbling in and out of Corinth. Wild cheering could be heard as the trains came in.

On May 28th General Nelson pushed his division close up to the enemy's works. The practiced eyes of his officers saw that the works were slightly manned and could be taken.

Hugh came galloping back to Nelson, his face

aflame with excitement. "General," he exclaimed, "Captain Wheeler of General Amnen's staff, bade me tell you that if you will give permission, the brigade can be in Corinth in twenty minutes."

Nelson uttered a big oath. "I dare not," he said; "but I will report to Halleck, though precious little good it will do."

When General Halleck was told what Captain Wheeler had reported, and that he asked permission to make the charge, he smiled disdainfully, and said:

"Nelson, your officers are simply crazy to think of such a thing. Your division would be slaughtered. The enemy is receiving heavy reinforcements. Have you not heard the rumbling of the trains, and the cheering as the reinforcements arrived?"

"But, General," persisted Nelson, "the rumbling of the trains may mean they are evacuating, and the cheering may be done on purpose to deceive."

"When I want advice, I will let you know," replied Halleck, loftily. "Go back to your command, and when I wish you to charge you will receive orders."

Away around on the right Sherman had made an advance and captured a commanding position. One of his brigades, commanded by General John A. Logan, was astride of the Memphis Railroad. In his brigade were a number of experienced railroad men. They listened to the rumbling of the trains, as they moved in and out. Reporting to Logan, they said:

“General, every train that goes out of Corinth is heavily loaded; every train that comes in is empty. We cannot be deceived. Our ears know the difference between the sounds of an empty and a loaded train too well. Corinth is being evacuated.”

Logan sent the information to Halleck, and asked permission to advance. Halleck by this time was thoroughly angry. “Tell Logan when I want him to advance, I will let him know,” was the reply, “and tell him to pay no attention to the idle stories of his men.”

On the morning of May 30th heavy explosions were heard in Corinth. A heavy column of black smoke arose and hung over the city. All in front was silent, not even a single shot came from a picket. The Federal skirmishers advanced, and found the works deserted. Corinth was evacuated.

The fleeing army was pursued, but not overtaken. General Pope, in the exuberance of his spirits, sent word to Halleck that the woods were full of stragglers, and that he would take ten thousand prisoners.

Halleck immediately telegraphed to Washington that Corinth had fallen with ten thousand prisoners, and the whole North went wild with joy. But the truth soon became known, that the victory was a barren one, and that all that Halleck had to show was a little territory—nothing else. So the bells ceased ringing and the cannon ceased firing. The inevitable came to pass. Halleck's great army, an

army that could have swept the enemy to the Gulf, was broken up. Grant held Corinth and turned toward the Mississippi. Buell turned to the east, and was ordered to capture Chattanooga.

The effects of the evacuation of Corinth were to the Federal cause worse than a defeat.

CHAPTER II.

CARRYING DISPATCHES TO MITCHELL.

THE pursuit of Beauregard's army was undertaken with great parade and flourish of trumpets, but it amounted to nothing. The Confederates halted at Okalona, and there began to lay plans for the recovery of the States of Tennessee and Kentucky. On the Federal side Nelson's division was stopped in the pursuit of Beauregard at Booneville, a place some thirty miles south of Corinth. From there it was turned back and encamped at Iuka.

In the meantime Halleck had planned great things. Buell was to march east, capture Chattanooga, and then make a campaign into Eastern Tennessee. It was on the program that he was even to threaten Atlanta.

Grant was to operate south and west, and open up the Mississippi. These plans looked well on paper, and they commenced well, for Memphis fell on the 7th of June, and on the same day Negley's cannon thundered at the gates of Chattanooga. But Negley had but one brigade, was unsupported, and had to fall back over the mountains. The Confederate generals, also, were to have

something to say about Halleck's plans being carried out.

On the arrival of Nelson's division at Iuka that general sent for Hugh Raymond and John Stewart, and told them he had an urgent mission on which he wished to send them.

"I have received from Generals Halleck and Buell dispatches of the utmost importance," said he, "which must be placed as soon as possible in the hands of General Mitchell at Huntsville. These dispatches relate to the manner of conducting the coming campaign, and on no account must they fall into the hands of the enemy. While I do not consider the journey necessarily a dangerous one, it may become so, for there is no telling when you may run into a roving company of Forrest's cavalry. I have chosen you to carry the dispatches, relying upon your bravery and good judgment."

At these words of the general both Hugh and Stewart saluted, and Stewart said: "General, we are grateful for the confidence you repose in us, and we shall try not to be unworthy of it. If need be, the dispatches will be protected with our lives."

As for Hugh, he was so overjoyed at the commission that he hardly heard what was being said.

"I am confident," the general replied, "the dispatches are in good hands. You had better cross the river at Eastport, then continue east through Florence, Rogersville, and Athens. This is not

only the shorter, but the less dangerous route. But remember you are riding through an enemy's country. This will be the case, especially, between Florence and Athens. Do not spare horseflesh. Change horses if necessary at Florence and Athens. Here is an order that will enable you to do so. That is all."

The two soldiers were soon on their way, Hugh light-hearted and merry, Stewart silent and pre-occupied, as usual.

"This is a lark," remarked Hugh, after they had been on the way for some time.

"It may not be as much of a lark as you think," answered Stewart, and he again relapsed into silence.

"What is the matter, Stewart?" at length asked Hugh; "you are as solemn as a deacon; you are awfully glum."

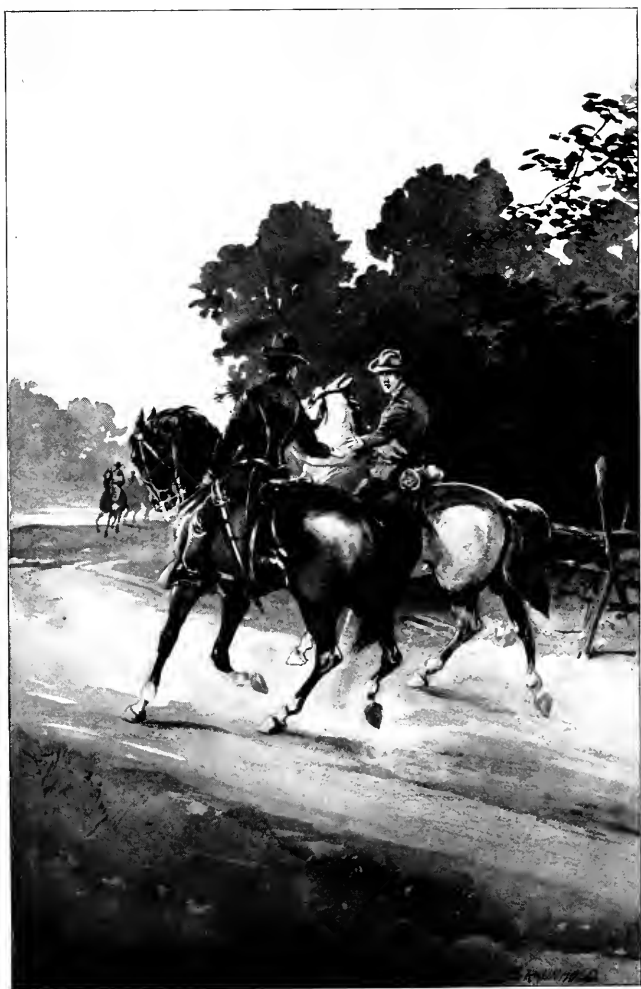
"Am I?" replied Stewart, with a faint smile. "To tell the truth, I feel glum, as if something were going to happen to me—to be killed, perhaps."

"Oh, pshaw! Stewart, what's the use of talking like that? We are going to have a jolly trip, see if we don't. Cheer up, old boy."

"I hope so; but, Hugh, if anything should happen to me, the dispatches are in my breast pocket. Get them and defend them to the death."

"Stewart, you have the blues. For mercy's sake, get a smile on your face. You will feel all right when we get through."

The day was an uneventful one, and they



"Wheel, and Ride for your Life."

approached Rogersville just as night was falling. Hugh was rallying Stewart on his fears, when a turn in the road suddenly brought them face to face with a company of Confederate cavalry. So unexpected was the meeting that the Confederates for a moment gazed at the scouts in astonishment.

As quick as thought Stewart jerked the dispatches from his pocket, and handing them to Hugh, cried, "Wheel, and ride for your life." Then, revolver in hand, he boldly charged on the Confederates.

At Stewart's command, Hugh hurriedly turned his horse and raced to the rear, never realizing the desperate resolution his companion had taken. Hearing the sharp reports of carbines and revolvers, he looked back, just in time to see Stewart, in the midst of his mad charge, reel and fall from his horse. Hugh's first impulse was to go to his aid, but he remembered the dispatches, as well as the hopelessness of such an attempt, and spurred his horse forward. Then there came a volley, and the balls hissed around him. His horse gave a quick start, and ran with greater speed than ever for a short distance, then staggered and fell, arose and fell again, never more to rise.

Thanks to his skillful horsemanship, Hugh escaped being caught under the falling horse; but the Confederates were close after him, and, on foot, he darted into a wood which fortunately lined one side of the road.

As the Confederates came up to the dead horse

they stopped, swore loud and furiously over Hugh's escape, and fired two or three volleys into the shadows of the wood, hoping to stop the fugitive by a chance shot.

It was now dark, and the leader said: "No use, boys; he has escaped. One can't see his hand before him in those woods. Curse the luck! I would like to have got them both."

"Lieutenant," spoke up a soldier, "I believe they were the bearers of important dispatches. I saw the one who charged us so boldly hand a package to the boy just as he wheeled his horse. I believe the fellow deliberately gave up his life, thinking the boy might escape and save the dispatches."

"Well," responded the lieutenant, "it was the pluckiest deed I ever saw. He emptied two of our saddles. I wonder if the fellow is dead?"

"He ought to be," replied the soldier, "from the number of bullets fired at him. Those dispatches must have been important, or he would never have flung his life away like that."

"I reckon the boy will find hard work getting through with them now," responded the lieutenant, as he ordered his men to mount; "there is some comfort in that."

While the soldiers were talking, Hugh was plunging into the woods with the energy of desperation. Falling over logs, running against trees, whipped by the brush, he at last stopped, exhausted. He listened intently, but there was no sound of pur-

suit. The woods were silent, save for the sighing of the wind through the trees. He was shaking as with ague, and his breath came in quick gasps. The precious dispatches he still clutched in his hand.

He sat down to rest and think. He seemed dazed, and turned to speak to Stewart to ask him what they should do, when suddenly he realized the fate of his companion. A great sob arose in his throat, and tears gushed from his eyes. A realization of his loneliness and helplessness came over him, and he threw himself on the ground in an agony of grief. In the fire and smoke of battle Hugh knew no fear, being carried away by the excitement and clamor of the moment. But here, alone in the woods, his horse killed, surrounded by foes, a different kind of courage was required, and his heart sank. Then the fate of Stewart horrified him. The man had deliberately ridden to his death that the dispatches might be saved.

But Hugh was no coward, and soon his natural bravery and spirits began to return. He arose, dashed the tears from his eyes, and exclaimed: "This will never do; these dispatches must be delivered. I cannot be more than twenty-five or thirty miles from Athens. I will get there, if I have to skulk through the woods and fields, and I have no time to lose."

The night was dark, and he had no idea which way to go. He groped his way along, but was continually running against trees, falling over logs,

and his face was scratched and bleeding from contact with the brush.

"It's no use," he sighed; "I must wait for daylight," and throwing himself on the ground, he again gave way to his feelings.

How long Hugh lay there he never knew. To him it seemed hours. Suddenly there was borne to his ears the sound of a rude chant. Was he awake, or dreaming? No, the notes of the music came to him faintly but clearly. Peering through the woods, he caught the gleam of a light. Cautiously working his way toward it, he came upon a scene so fantastic, so weird, that he stopped and gazed in astonishment.

A small circle had been cleared in the woods; in the center of this clearing burned a bright fire. Around it were squatted forty or fifty negroes. The singing had ceased, and they were being harangued by one of their number. The light brought their dusky faces into bold relief, and their shadows, cast by the flames as they leaped and flickered, danced in among the trembling foliage, like so many specters. All at once the speaking ceased; the negroes arose, joined hands around the fire, and keeping time with their swaying bodies, commenced a chant. And this is what they sang:

"De glory ob de Lawd am cummin',
We see it a-blazin' in de dawn,
De Linkum sogers am a trampin',
Jus' heah de tootin' ob de hawn.

"Wake up, chil'ens! Wake up, chil'ens!
De glory ob de Lawd am cum,
Wake up, chil'ens! Wake up, chil'ens!
De glory ob de Lawd am cum.

"We hab bin a-lookin' an' a-prayin',
Foh de yeah ob jubilee to cum,
Now de sogers, dey am a-marchin',
Jus' heah de beatin' ob de drum.

"Wake up, chil'ens," etc.

"No mo' de little pickaninny,
Shall be sold into cruel slabery,
Massa Linkum, he hab spoken
An' de darkies all am free.

"Wake up, chil'ens," etc.

Hugh at once knew he had met friends, and without thinking of the consequences, deliberately walked into their midst. His appearance caused an instantaneous panic. With shrieks of mortal terror, most of the negroes plunged into the darkness of the forest. Two or three of the boldest, however, set upon Hugh, and before he could speak he was pinioned to the ground, fingers of iron gripped his throat, and a flashing knife gleamed before his eyes. Never was Hugh nearer to death. He tried to cry out, but no sound came, and everything grew black before him. In his agony he threw out an arm. The color of the sleeve of the blouse caught the negro's eye. The deadly grip relaxed, the descending knife stopped in its course.

"Who air yo'?" asked the negro in a hoarse voice. It was some time before Hugh could get

his breath enough to answer. At last he managed to gasp out, "Friend—Lincoln soldier."

"How cum yo' heah?"

"Let me up, and I will tell you."

Hugh was raised to his feet, but still held in a firm grasp, until they became fully convinced that he was in reality a Lincoln soldier. The frightened negroes came stealing back one by one, and with open mouth listened to his story. Most of them had heard something of the fight, and that one of the Yankees had escaped. When he had finished, they crowded around him, asked pardon for their violence, and would have covered his hand with kisses if he had let them.

"Now, boys," he said, "I must get to Athens. Can you not help me? I have letters from Mr. Lincoln to General Mitchell. It was to get these letters that the rebels attacked us. They are very important. You know my horse was killed; is there not some way you can get me another horse?"

The burly negro who acted as leader scratched his head, and said: "Don't know 'bout dat, massa; hosses mighty scarce. So many stolen, white folks take good care of dem; keep dem locked up; hid in de woods. Now, Massa Jones hab good hoss hid in de woods; but golly! he kill me if dat hoss gone. Heah, Jim," addressing a quaking individual who had just slid back from the woods, "how 'bout Doctah Jenkins's hoss?"

"Massa Jenkins hab only one ole hoss; de rest

all stolen. Says dis hoss so po' and mean no one want him. Massa keep him in stable—no lock. But, Lawd, massa, yo' don't want dat hoss; hardly go at all."

"He would be better than none," spoke up Hugh. "I can get another horse, when I get to Athens."

Jim didn't much like the idea of stealing his master's horse, and it was only after he was threatened by the other negroes that he consented.

"I'm a gone nigger, suah, if Massa Jenkins fin' it out," he whimpered.

"I will fix that, Jim," spoke up Hugh. "I will leave a note telling the doctor I took him, and I will see that your master gets a horse back, or pay for this one. Everybody in Rogersville knows about the fight, and that I got away. No one will suspect you."

So it was arranged that Jim should steal the doctor's horse. By the light of the fire Hugh wrote the promised note, telling Jim to leave it in the stable. Bidding his dusky friends good-bye, Hugh was conducted by Jim to the outskirts of the village, close to the doctor's residence. Here he was told to wait. In about ten minutes Jim came back with the horse saddled and bridled, but the poor negro was trembling so that his teeth rattled. It was plain to be seen that it was only from fear of the vengeance of his companions that he had taken the horse.

The feelings of Doctor Jenkins can better be

imagined than described when, in the morning, he found his horse gone. But Hugh's note explained it all, and Jim was not suspected.

Hugh found the horse fully as old and slow as Jim had said, but it was much better than going on foot. He skirted around the little village, and then struck the main road to Athens. The horse refused to go faster than a slow trot, and Hugh was bemoaning his bad luck, when he was startled by the tramping of horses a short distance ahead. He hastily withdrew from the road, and took shelter in the shadow of a friendly tree, for the moon was now shining faintly. A squadron of Confederate cavalry swept by, and from snatches of conversation he learned that they had been out looking for him. Hugh now blessed his stars that his horse was old and slow. If he had been riding fast, he might have ridden into the midst of these cavalrymen before he heard them.

He was yet several miles from Athens when day broke, but he was in a country which was more or less scouted by the Federal cavalry, and therefore in little danger. It was nearly noon when he rode into the little city and reported to Colonel Turchin, of the Nineteenth Illinois Volunteers, the commander of the post. The colonel listened to his story with a great deal of interest.

"To-morrow morning," said he, "a train under the escort of cavalry leaves here for Huntsville. The road is dangerous to travel without an escort; wait until then, and you can go through with them.

In the meantime, I will see that a horse is procured for you. Now," he continued kindly, "go and get some rest; you have had a hard time of it."

Hugh thanked the colonel for his kindness, but lingered as if he would say more.

"What is it, my boy?"

"Would—would it be too much to ask that if possible you would see what has become of Stewart? I almost know he was killed, but I would like to have him have a decent burial."

"From your story," replied the colonel, "Stewart deserves a monument. He was certainly a hero. I shall act on your suggestion. I want to clean out that nest of Rebel cavalry that has been hanging around Rogersville, anyway."

"And see that the doctor gets his horse back," added Hugh. "The way I got him was a little too much like stealing."

The colonel smiled. "Yes, I will see about that, too."

The next morning Hugh left for Huntsville in company with the cavalry, and the journey was concluded without incident.

CHAPTER III.

THE PARALYZING HAND OF HALLECK.

GENERAL O. M. MITCHELL sat in his headquarters at Huntsville poring over a number of maps which were spread out on a table before him. He looked careworn, and his countenance had a troubled expression. At length he rolled up the maps, gave a sigh, and sat buried in deep thought. His meditations were interrupted by an orderly who came in, saluted, and said, "A courier, who has just arrived from Corinth with dispatches, awaits outside."

"Show him in at once," said the general, eagerly, and a moment afterwards Hugh was ushered into the room.

"Are you direct from General Halleck?" was the first question asked by Mitchell.

"I am direct from General Nelson at Iuka," replied Hugh; "but he told me the dispatches I have were from Generals Halleck and Buell."

"When did you leave Iuka?"

"Three days ago."

"Did you come through alone?"

"Only from Rogersville to Athens. A comrade started with me, but he was killed near Rogersville."

I should have been here some hours earlier had we not been attacked near that place by a squad of cavalry."

"Ah! you were attacked, then?"

"Yes, general."

"I will hear about it later. I must now look over the dispatches you have brought. Make yourself comfortable at my headquarters until I send for you."

Hugh retired, and the general eagerly turned to his dispatches. As he read his brow contracted, and his whole face showed the most bitter disappointment.

Having read them through, he dashed them to the floor in a passion, exclaiming: "All is lost! All is lost! Fools! Fools!"

Arising, he paced the floor with quick, nervous steps. "What is the use of worrying," he at last muttered to himself. "My work will all be undone, but what will that matter to me? What fools! what fools! To think they can fuss with a needless railroad for weeks, and still capture Chattanooga."

When Buell commenced his advance from Nashville to Shiloh, General O. M. Mitchell executed one of the most brilliant lesser movements of the war. Starting from Shelbyville, Tennessee, by a rapid march his advance appeared before Huntsville, Alabama, on the morning of April 11th. If his army had dropped from the clouds the inhabitants of that little city would not have been more astonished. The place surrendered without resistance.

Mitchell captured one hundred and seventy prisoners, fifteen locomotives, and one hundred and fifty passenger and freight cars.

Using Huntsville as a base of operation, he sent a force by rail east and west, and in twenty-four hours was in possession of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad from Decatur to Stevenson, a distance of over one hundred miles.

All through the weary days when Halleck was creeping toward Corinth, Mitchell held this road, fighting a number of successful small engagements, and by a rapid combination of his troops in different places, made the enemy think his force was three times as large as it really was. He ordered Negley's brigade to cross the mountains from McMinnville, and on the 7th of June that brigade reached the Tennessee opposite Chattanooga and shelled that city. But Negley's force was so small he did not deem it prudent to try to cross the river, and owing to a lack of supplies he was forced to fall back to McMinnville.

Chattanooga was the gateway not only to East Tennessee, but to Atlanta, Georgia. If it had been taken early in the war, the backbone of the Confederacy would have been broken.

After Corinth was evacuated, Halleck planned large campaigns on paper. Grant was to open the Mississippi, and Buell was to complete the work so auspiciously begun by Mitchell. Chattanooga once captured, the campaign was to be extended into East Tennessee, and Atlanta itself threatened.

The plan was perfectly feasible, but to be successful it required a bold, rapid movement. Buell wanted to make the campaign by the way of Tennessee and McMinnville, paying no attention to the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, but Halleck was in favor of moving directly east along the line of the road. After a long discussion, Halleck yielded to Buell, and that general left immediately for Iuka to put his plan into execution.

But Buell was hardly out of sight before Halleck changed his mind, and telegraphed him that he must keep along the line of the railroad. He did more: he ordered Buell to repair the road from Iuka to Decatur as he advanced. This not only meant days, but weeks of delay. Buell remonstrated against the order, but his remonstrance did no good. In a letter dated the 17th of June, Buell wrote to Halleck, as follows:

“The movement I am making cannot be made without risk, if not made promptly. It seems to me that the importance of the railroad from Bear Creek to Decatur is greatly overrated; as a means of transferring troops, it is of no value whatever, and as a channel for supplying those in Tennessee, it is neither needed nor convenient, while its exposure to interruption makes it extremely objectionable.”

Halleck, however, was deaf to all reasoning, and ordered Buell to carry out his orders. Thus left without choice, Buell advanced slowly, repairing the railroad as he went. The delay was fatal.

Great as was Halleck's mistake in the advance on Corinth, this was a greater one. It brought to naught the whole campaign, and prolonged the war for at least one year. For the paralyzing touch of Halleck, the nation paid dearly.

The dispatches which Hugh carried to Mitchell told that general of Halleck's plans; that the railroad must be repaired before Buell could join him. Mitchell already had the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad repaired nearly to Stevenson, and there remained a gap of only twenty miles that needed repairs in the railroad leading from Nashville to Decatur. For a campaign against Chattanooga, the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad was really the only one needed. Afterwards, this one road supplied Sherman's immense army on the Atlanta campaign.

No wonder General Mitchell was in utter despair when he received Halleck's orders. He saw that the whole movement would result in complete failure.

To all this there was a curious ending. General Buell was relieved of his command in the fall, and a military commission was organized at Cincinnati to inquire into his conduct as commanding general; why he failed to capture Chattanooga, and thus made the invasion of Kentucky by Bragg possible.

After days of inquiry, this presumably eminently wise, august, and impartial Commission made the following report:

"When the Rebels evacuated Corinth, there was

no place upon which they could rally in time to oppose successfully the army under Major-General Halleck in his attempt to open the Mississippi, and possess ourselves of East Tennessee. To accomplish the latter purpose, General Buell, in command of what has since been known as 'The Army of the Ohio,' was sent in the direction of Chattanooga with instructions to seize that place and through it East Tennessee. It has been proved on the part of the government, and not denied by the defense, that the Rebels were not in force at that time in either place, and had General Buell pushed on, he would have taken the more important strategic points almost without resistance. Why this was not done, General Buell assures us, was owing to a lack of supplies, and the attempt to repair and keep open long lines of railroad through a hostile population. But the most extraordinary fact in this connection pressing upon the Commission, is that the commander of the Army of the Ohio knew at the time that these lines of railway would be useless for the lack of rolling stock, and although an attempt is made evidently to shield himself under the orders of Major-General Halleck, we find no earnest remonstrance that would justify the Commission in regarding such a defense as sufficient. The brief oral instructions claimed to have been received, followed by the yet briefer telegram, evidenced a confidence in and a discretionary power given to Major-General Buell, which should now bar any attempt to shift the responsibility. The

fact that he knew, at the time, the hopelessness and absurdity of these efforts is conclusive."

There can be but one conclusion drawn from this most extraordinary finding of the Commission. Buell was the under dog in the fight. He had been removed from his command; in a measure, he was in disgrace; he was execrated by nearly the whole of his army and half of the North. Therefore, he had no power to reward or punish; no influence to be felt.

On the other hand, Halleck was high in authority, the military adviser of the President, and virtually the commander-in-chief of the Federal armies. It would not do to censure Halleck; it might cause the honorable members of the Commission trouble; so Buell not only had to bear his own sins, but was made the scapegoat of Halleck.

But even this toadying did not placate Halleck. Like a Bourbon, he never learned. The Commission had had the temerity to call his pet scheme of repairing the railroad "an absurdity."

When the report of the Commission was forwarded to him at Washington, he sat down in wrath and wrote:

"So much of the report as states that General Buell's advance was delayed by the repairs on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad, and that General Buell's lines of supply were unnecessarily long, is incorrect. General Buell had no other line of supply than this road until he reached Decatur and connected with the Nashville road."

Eastport, on the Tennessee River, was at that time a depot of supplies for the Federal army. From Eastport it is hardly two days' march to Decatur. Yet in the above Halleck solemnly declared it was necessary to spend weeks in repairing a railroad to cover this short distance.

And this is the man who sat in judgment on our generals for years. It was only when he was forbidden to interfere with Grant and Sherman that the war was brought to a successful close.

As commanding general, it was Halleck's business to order Buell to make the movement on Chattanooga as expeditiously as possible. Yet, forsooth, Buell is condemned, because he did not accompany his protest to Halleck with a kick.

It is to be hoped that in future years, history will render General Buell justice in this matter.

Was it any wonder that the dispatches which Hugh brought utterly crushed every hope that Mitchell had of taking Chattanooga? Terrific battles were to be fought, thousands to be slain, and months to pass before Chattanooga should fall.

In the morning after Hugh's arrival, he was told that General Nelson's division was to move in a few days as far east as Huntsville, and that he need not make the return journey until then. Instead, he was sent to Nashville with dispatches, making most of the journey by rail. When he returned he found that Nelson, with his division, had reached Athens, and he joined the general there.

He was warmly greeted by Nelson, who informed

him that he was Sergeant Hugh Raymond now, promoted for bravery and fidelity in carrying the dispatches.

"But, General, I do not deserve this," said Hugh, with quivering lip. "It was Stewart who gave his life that I might get away with the dispatches. If that man had lived, he ought to have been made a general. He went to his death, while all I had to do was to run."

"And a very good run you made of it, Sergeant," answered the general. "It takes far more courage to run sometimes than it does to stand still and be taken prisoner. You took your life in your hands when you ran."

"But Stewart, General, does any one know what became of his body? Did you march through Rogersville when you came here?"

A twinkle came into Nelson's eye as he answered: "I think I will send you to Rogersville to-morrow, and let you look the matter up. The place is now garrisoned by a small force of our men."

The next morning, just as Hugh was starting on his trip to Rogersville, he witnessed an incident he could never think of without laughing. But it had its serious side to at least one person, and that was a peddler of pies.

An Alabama cracker, tall, lank, sallow, came into the camp selling pies. They were of half-moon shape, the crust a good substitute for India rubber, and the filling indescribable.

“Heah is yo’ fine peach pe-ies, only fifty cents!” he was yelling at the top of his voice.

Anything in the shape of a pie made the boys’ mouths water, and the man was soon surrounded by a crowd of soldiers and doing a flourishing business, when Nelson came along. He was in a furious passion. Supplies were not coming up to suit him; he had received orders to send part of his division toward Nashville to help to guard the railroad; and he was out of sorts generally. Seeing the man engaged in selling his pies, he rode up to him and thundered, “I thought I told you to keep out of this camp, selling those abominations you call pies.”

The fellow was thoroughly frightened. “I—I—forgot,” he stammered.

“Forgot, did you? Well, you will never forget again. Here corporal,” turning to a grinning soldier, “take this fellow out and hang him.”

The terror-stricken wretch dropped his pies, fell on his knees, and raised his hands pleadingly.

“Mercy! mercy!” he gasped. “I hev a wife an’ eight chil’uns! I never will sell enny mo’ pe-ies, Ginerel, indeed I won’t.”

“Mercy! do you think you deserve mercy, selling those things to my boys for fifty cents apiece? They are more dangerous than Rebel bullets. Here, eat every one of them, and that quick, or I will hang you.”

The man snatched up a pie, and in a moment it was gone.

"Now, another."

He picked up the second one, but it disappeared a little slower. As he took the last mouthful, he looked up at the general with a pleading eye.

"Another! don't be fooling about it."

The third disappeared, amid the shouts and laughter of the soldiers who had crowded around to see the fun.

"Don't be slow about it,—another."

The fellow slowly reached for the fourth pie. He choked on it two or three times, but it at last joined its companions.

"I can't eat enny mo', Ginerel, I can't," moaned the poor fellow.

"Take him out and hang him, corporal," shouted Nelson.

The corporal reached out for the man, but the victim grabbed another pie, and was gulping it down in huge mouthfuls. When he had finished, he looked up at Nelson with tears streaming down his face.

"One more or hang."

Tremblingly he reached for the sixth pie, took a few mouthfuls, but nature had reached its limit—the stomach revolted.

"Escort him out of the camp," said Nelson to the corporal, "and hang him if he ever shows his face here again."

Amid the hoots, jeers, yells, and cat-calls of the soldiers, he was led out of camp, bent half double, his hands pressed on his stomach, and groaning at

every step. Just as the corporal left him, he handed him his basket, saying, "Here is your basket, Uncle."

Strange to say there was not a single pie in it.

"Did I eat 'em all?" whimpered the man, as he took the basket.

"Every one, Uncle, every one. I think you must have devoured at least two dozen," answered the corporal, with a wink as he walked away.

It was a hot, dusty ride, but in his eagerness Hugh covered the distance to Rogersville by noon. To the commander of the post, Captain Cope-land, he presented a personal letter from Nelson. The captain read it, smiled, and said: "I think, Sergeant, I can take you to a person who can give you the information you wish. But first, wash the dust of travel from you, and have some dinner. I am in luck to-day. I can give you much better than soldier's fare."

After dinner the captain walked with Hugh to a commodious house, which stood in a beautiful grove on the outskirts of the village. They were met at the door by a fine looking old Southern gentleman, who shook hands cordially with the captain.

"Allow me, Doctor," said the captain, "to introduce to you Sergeant Hugh Raymond, who would like to see your patient."

"Yes, sah, this way, sah," replied the doctor.

Hugh's heart gave a great bound, — "his patient!" Could it be that Stewart was alive?

They were ushered into a large, airy room, and

there, propped up in bed, was Stewart, looking pale and thin, but alive and smiling:

With a cry of joy, Hugh was on his knees beside the bed, one of Stewart's hands in his, and crying: "John! John! how glad I am to see you. Then you were not killed after all!"

"No, Hugh, I am worth a dozen dead men yet. This left arm you see all bandaged up was broken. I have a hole through my thigh, and as you see, a ball gave me a pretty deep scalp wound. The last rendered me senseless, and I was left for dead. I would have died if it had not been for good Doctor Jenkins here, who, although an enemy, obeyed the Scriptures—took me in and bound up my wounds."

"Doctor Jenkins! Doctor Jenkins!" gasped Hugh. "Why, it was the doctor's horse I got away with!"

"Here, Doctor," shouted Stewart, "here is the thief that stole your horse; he has confessed."

Hugh looked foolish, but soon rallied, and said: "Doctor, I hope you will forgive me; it was a case of necessity. I am here now to make amends, if you did not get the horse back. I left orders to have him returned."

"I will forgive you, Sergeant, seeing that General Nelson gave me a much better one," laughed the doctor.

"Hugh," said Stewart in a low voice, so as not to be heard by the others, "the doctor is a brick—a perfect brick—if he is a cantankerous, fire-eating Reb. He is one of the best men I ever saw; he



Stewart's Eye brightened as a light Step entered the Room.

saved my life. And then," here Stewart hesitated, blushed, and his voice sank to a whisper, "he has one of the sweetest, dearest girls for a daughter you ever saw."

"So! So!" whispered Hugh, "the land lies that way, does it? Another case of Othello and Desdemona. I suppose congratulations are in order, old fellow."

Hugh saw Stewart's eye brighten, as a light step was heard entering the room, and a moment later he was introduced to Miss Ruth Jenkins. She was a pretty girl, with deep, tender blue eyes, and her voice was sweet and low, with that soft accent which is one of the chief charms of the Southern girl.

When Hugh got an opportunity, he whispered to Stewart: "I say, old boy, you are a lucky fellow. Here I have been mourning for you dead, and, instead of that, you have captured one of the sweetest girls in Alabama. I wouldn't mind being shot, if you would guarantee like results. Has the doctor any more girls?"

"No, Hugh, I am sorry, but you see one family couldn't afford two such girls as Ruth."

"Just my luck; but, John, you deserve it all."

Stewart pressed Hugh's hand; he was too happy for words.

Just before they took their leave, Captain Cope-land turned to Hugh and said: "Oh, yes! I came nearly forgetting. By request of General Nelson, Sergeant Hugh Raymond, let me introduce you to Lieutenant John Stewart."

CHAPTER IV.

A THREE-HUNDRED-MILE RACE.

THE year 1862, which opened so auspiciously for the Union arms, closed in gloom. The splendid victories which commenced with Mill Springs, followed by Donelson, Shiloh, the fall of New Orleans, and of Island No. 10, ceased with the evacuation of Corinth.

On the Peninsula, McClellan was beaten back from before Richmond. Pope's boastful and vain-glorious campaign in Virginia ended with the awful slaughter and defeat of Manassas.

The victorious march of the Army of the Ohio under Buell was suddenly stopped. For weeks it struggled against the inevitable, groping like a man in the dark for an antagonist it could not find; it then was swept back for three hundred miles, and found itself once more on the banks of the Ohio.

The whole State of Tennessee, east of the Tennessee River, with the exception of Nashville, fell into the hands of the Confederacy. Half of the State of Kentucky went the same way. Grant, however, held his own from Corinth west to Memphis.

Buell's halt to repair the railroad had given the

Confederates a breathing spell and time to concentrate an army at Chattanooga. Beauregard had been relieved from command, and Braxton Bragg appointed in his place. Bragg was a bold and aggressive general. He at once began to plan to force Buell back and invade Kentucky. He even contemplated crossing the Ohio and capturing Cincinnati, thus making the North feel the heavy weight of war.

This contemplated advance of Bragg could never have been brought about, had it not been for the daring deeds of two Confederate cavalry officers, General N. B. Forrest and Colonel John H. Morgan. These two men literally became the scourge of the Federal army. They brought to naught the well laid plans of our generals, prevented Buell's contemplated Chattanooga campaign, and at last made it possible for Bragg to send our armies scurrying back to Louisville. To Morgan and Forrest belong the honor of accomplishing with a few hundred men what many generals would not have accomplished with thousands.

In July, Morgan, with less than a thousand men, swept through the State of Kentucky like a whirlwind almost up to the Ohio River. He captured town after town, destroyed hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of property, tore up miles of railroad, burnt bridges, threw trains off the tracks, and drove the whole State into a panic. During the same month, Forrest captured Murfreesboro, with hundreds of prisoners, including General

Crittenden; tore up the railroad nearly to Nashville, and escaped comparatively unharmed.

These raids, by destroying the railroads, cut off the supplies from Buell's army, and put the men on half and quarter rations. Now commenced the dissatisfaction against Buell, which at last grew to such proportions as to cause his removal. Buell was a strict disciplinarian. He severely punished foraging, and protected the property of Secessionists and Unionists alike. His soldiers, suffering with hunger, looked with longing eyes toward the rich fields and well filled smoke-houses they were not allowed to touch. The murmuring was not only deep, but loud. At last a soldier was shot by a Southern planter under peculiarly atrocious circumstances, because he entered a field of corn. It almost raised a mutiny, and aggravated the feeling against Buell.

At this time the cavalry arm of the Federal army was weak in numbers and inefficient. It was found impossible to catch Forrest or Morgan with infantry, so those generals harassed the rear of the Federal army at will.

It was known to Buell and his generals that Bragg was about ready to move, but as to when and where he would strike, they were completely in the dark. They found it almost impossible to get any reliable information.

One day Thomas and Nelson were discussing the situation, and Thomas said:

"General, I wish that protégé of yours, Captain

Shackelford, were here. Young as he was, he was the most reliable scout I ever had. He seemed to divine the plans of the enemy, almost by intuition."

"Confound him!" growled Nelson, "I am afraid we have lost him altogether."

"How is that?" asked Thomas.

"At Nashville I had him regularly commissioned as captain. No commission was ever more worthily bestowed. It was information I received from him, that made me make my race for Shiloh. He found his father, who was a Confederate colonel, desperately wounded on the battlefield, and asked and received an indefinite leave of absence to take him home. A couple of weeks ago, I wrote him, asking him if possible to return, saying I needed his services very much. The young cub responded by sending me his resignation. I am afraid he is being influenced by his father."

"I am sorry to hear it," responded Thomas. "I became greatly attached to him."

"I am holding his resignation," continued Nelson, "in hopes he will reconsider. I expect to see him shortly. I received orders to-day to give up my division and go back to Kentucky to take command of the troops in that State."

"So I hear," answered Thomas. "My congratulations, General; if I mistake not, the field will be a lively one before long."

"Thomas," answered Nelson, evidently with much feeling, "I don't want to go back. I hate to give up my division, and have protested against

going, but the last orders are imperative. Then—then—”

“Then what, General?”

“I am ashamed to say it, but I have a feeling that some calamity is impending, and I dread to go back.”

Thomas smiled. “General, you are not superstitious, are you?”

“No, but somehow I cannot get rid of this feeling. I believe my going back to Kentucky will be neither for my own good nor the good of my country.”

In August Morgan made another raid, capturing Gallatin, and then in a pitched battle defeated the Federal cavalry under General R. W. Johnson. A few days afterwards, Forrest swept entirely around Nashville, escaping by the way of West Tennessee.

Buell was at his wits' end. Word came that General Kirby Smith with a large force was advancing into Kentucky through Cumberland Gap, and that Bragg had crossed the Tennessee at Chattanooga. Although the air had been full of rumors that Bragg intended to invade Kentucky, Buell would not believe that that general would try to slip past him.

“It would not be military for Bragg to leave a hostile army in his rear,” reasoned Buell. He confidently believed that Bragg would try to destroy his army before he made any attempt to invade Kentucky, and therefore would attack him. But where? This was what puzzled Buell. He

first gave orders for his army to concentrate at Altamont, then at McMinnville, then at Murfreesboro.

Second in command to Buell was General George H. Thomas. It was at this time that Thomas began to exhibit those qualities which afterwards placed him in the foremost rank of the Federal commanders. Since the battle of Mill Springs, he had had no opportunity to show his mettle. His division came too late to take part in the battle of Shiloh. He had an important command during the siege of Corinth, but no general could distinguish himself in that colossal failure. After the evacuation of Corinth, his division was kept guarding the railroad for weeks. Bragg had completely mystified and outgeneraled Buell, and Thomas tried to set him right.

"Bragg," said Thomas, "will neither attack you at McMinnville, Murfreesboro, nor Nashville. His destination is Kentucky, and he will pass to the east of us.

"What!" asked Buell in surprise, "and leave us in his rear?"

"Yes," replied Thomas. "The army should be concentrated with all possible dispatch at Sparta. You can then strike Bragg as he debouches from the Sequatchie Valley, and, I believe, administer an overwhelming defeat."

But Buell could not believe it. If he concentrated the army at Sparta, it would leave Murfreesboro and Nashville open to attack. So Thomas's

advice was put aside as worthless. Well would it have been for the country and for Buell, if it had been taken.

Buell was dumfounded when he learned that Bragg had crossed the Cumberland, and was two days' march ahead of him on his way north, and the race for the Ohio River began. It was one of the most peculiar movements of the war, this race for Louisville.

Bragg stopped two days to capture Mumfordsville, and this brought Buell up with him. For three days the two armies faced each other in battle array at Prewitt's Knob. Each commander hesitated to attack, for a defeat would have been fatal to either. It was here that the absurd story that Buell and Bragg slept together gained credence. These generals were brothers-in-law, and the story that they slept at a farmhouse outside of the lines during these three days was believed by thousands of the soldiers. So great was the dissatisfaction among the officers of the Federal army that, while at Prewitt's Knob, a secret council was held, and some of them boldly advocated the plan of deposing Buell by force, and putting Thomas in his place. This plan was brought to an abrupt close by an officer saying: "I know General Thomas well. I know of what stuff he is made. Now, try to depose Buell and elevate Thomas to the command, and he will be the first one to arrest, try, and shoot every one of you for mutiny."

This put an end to all the talk of deposing Buell and putting Thomas in his place.

At the end of three days, Bragg moved on, and now was presented the extraordinary spectacle of both armies traveling northward, on parallel roads, and but a few miles apart.

Before reaching Louisville, Bragg turned to the right to form a junction with Kirby Smith, and the road was left open for Buell to march his discontented, weary, ragged, bare-footed, half-starved men into Louisville, where not only food and raiment, but a royal welcome awaited them.

CHAPTER V.

A MEETING WITH MORGAN.

A FEW miles from Danville, Kentucky, on the Richmond road, may be seen one of those old-fashioned mansions which are so common in that part of the State. It stands well back from the road in a park of native forest trees. A winding driveway, bordered with flowers, leads from the road to the mansion. The surrounding landscape is one of surpassing beauty, and it never looked lovelier than one day in the latter part of July, 1862, as it lay smiling beneath the summer sun. Stacks of golden grain dotted the fields, ready to be delivered to the insatiable maw of the thresher. Fields of corn, rising and falling in gentle swells when touched by the passing breeze, were set like islands of emerald in the midst of a sea of brown. Pastures, rich in bluegrass, in which grazed the finest of horses and cattle, were seen on every side. Here and there were stretches of primeval forest, the lofty trees towering above the surrounding country, and beckoning with their waving branches, as if inviting the heated traveler to enter their cooling shade.

Yet, fair as was the landscape, peaceful as seemed the scene, the whole country was a seething volcano.

But as yet, although the war had been in progress over a year, Central Kentucky had, in a great measure, escaped its ravages. It is true that all her towns were garrisoned with Federal troops, and not a day passed but that some of her highways echoed with the steady tramp of marching columns. But the sanctity of private property had generally been respected, and the husbandman had been permitted to gather the fruits of his labor.

On the afternoon of that summer day, there sat on the porch of this mansion a father and son, the latter just entering manhood. The man was middle-aged, of martial appearance, and wore the uniform of a Confederate colonel. A pair of crutches rested on the arm of his chair, and a glance showed that one of his legs had been amputated below the knee. It was left on the bloody field of Shiloh.

The boy was hardly eighteen, though he looked at least twenty. While not above medium size, his frame was well knit, and his muscles stood out like knots of iron. The bronze of his face showed that he was no stranger to the tented field. He also wore a uniform, but it was of the Federal blue, and young as he was, the straps on his shoulder showed him to be a captain. There conversing quietly together they sat—father and son—Confederate and Federal.

Through an open window came the notes of a piano, and now and then was heard a sweet, girlish voice singing snatches of songs. The sound of the piano ceased, and a beautiful little girl, some thir-

teen years of age, came dancing out of the house. First she ran to the grave, quiet man in gray, and throwing her arm around his neck, covered his face with kisses; then she did the same to the boy in blue. Her love knew no difference between the Blue and the Gray. The storms of passion which swept the land had no place in her heart.

"Oh, Papa—Fred!" she cried, "how happy we all are once more! How glad I am to get away from that horrid old school and be at home! Papa, Fred, you will neither one go away to the awful war any more, will you?" And she ran to her father again, and entwined his neck with her loving, childish arms.

"Now promise, papa dear, promise," she said pleadingly.

Her father disengaged the clinging arms, then holding her at arms' length, he gazed into her eyes, and his own filled with tears.

"How like your mother you are growing, child! How like your mother!" he exclaimed, brokenly.

"But, papa, you haven't promised yet," replied the child, pouting.

"Well, Belle, Fred and I have been talking it over, and we have both about concluded that we have had enough of war. Now, does that satisfy you?"

"Oh, how glad I am! How glad I am!" she shouted. "Thank you, dear papa," and she flitted away, and the piano was soon heard rattling away at a livelier rate than before.

Colonel Shackelford continued to sit for some time in silence; then turning to his son he asked, "Fred, have you sent in your resignation?"

"Yes, father; but I have not heard from General Nelson yet."

"Well, Fred, I have concluded to resign my commission; that is, if I can get a communication through to the Confederate government, which is no easy matter just now."

"I am so rejoiced, father, that you have concluded to resign," answered Fred. "If the State is not invaded, we can live here safe and happy."

"Not happy, Fred, not happy; there can be no happiness for me as long as the South is bleeding. And if the Confederates should invade the State, as I hope and believe they will, it will be anything but peaceful. Fred, you and I may be drawn into the war again from the force of circumstances."

Fred sighed. "That's so, father. I think I shall ride to Danville this afternoon, and learn if there are any new developments."

"Do so, my son; but do not be gone longer than necessary. I am uneasy every moment you are out of my sight, lest some harm may come to you."

"That should be the last thing to trouble you, father," laughed Fred, as he went out to get ready for his trip.

He soon appeared mounted on a magnificent thoroughbred, and waving a salute to his father, galloped toward Danville.

Colonel Shackelford gazed after his son with

pride. The neat-fitting captain's uniform set off his figure to advantage, and he sat his horse like a centaur.

"A fine boy! A fine boy!" he muttered to himself, and then a shadow of extreme sorrow passed over his face. "What a pity," he continued, "what a pity he is untrue to the South!" and he sighed deeply.

The one great sorrow of Colonel Shackelford's life was that his son was fighting against a cause that he loved.

It was nearly dark when Fred returned from Danville.

"What news?" asked Colonel Shackelford, as he entered the house.

"Much, father," he replied with a grave countenance. "But first let us have tea; we can then talk uninterruptedly."

"You look worried, my son," said the Colonel; "you must have heard something that displeases you."

"You shall know all, father, presently," was the answer.

During the meal little was said except by Belle, who continued to prattle away, telling how happy she was, now that papa and brother were not going to war any more.

After tea Colonel Shackelford and his son withdrew to the porch, where they could talk without interruption, and at the same time enjoy the cool breezes of the evening.

"Well, Fred, what is it?" anxiously asked the Colonel.

"To tell the truth, father, things are looking pretty dark for the Federals, just now," replied Fred, gloomily.

Colonel Shackelford's face lighted up with joy. Fred noticed it, and a pang shot through his heart.

"Of course," continued Fred, "the news that McClellan has been forced to fall back from before Richmond is old. But it is now said that his army is *en route* back to Washington to defend it against an expected attack."

"We will have it this time! We will have it this time!" excitedly exclaimed his father, rapping the floor with his crutch. "The Yankees will never get in sight of Richmond again."

Without noticing the interruption Fred continued, "But the thing that concerns us most at present is that Morgan is on a big raid."

"Morgan on a raid? Where, Fred, where?"

"Close by. He captured Lebanon with its garrison and immense stores; then moved north, capturing town after town, tearing up the railroads, and even threatening Frankfort and Lexington. The last heard from him was that he had captured Cynthiana."

"Cynthiana, Fred, did you say Cynthiana? Is he as far north as Cynthiana?"

"Yes, but it is now reported that he is on the retreat southward, and he may pay us a visit, for all we know."

"Hurrah for Morgan!" shouted the Colonel, whirling his crutch around his head.

Fred smiled; he couldn't help it. It was rare that he ever saw his sedate father show any excitement.

But Colonel Shackelford suddenly stopped in the midst of his rejoicing; his face clouded, and he asked rather anxiously, "Fred, do you think it would be safe for you if Morgan should visit us?"

"Hardly, father; I should have to get out. But his most direct route southward would be east of us—through Richmond, probably."

"You know, Fred, you have resigned. You are really a private citizen now."

"But my resignation has not been accepted yet."

"Fred," and Colonel Shackelford hitched in his chair uneasily, "had—had you not better lay aside that uniform?"

A flush of shame and anger came over Fred's face, but he controlled himself, and answered calmly: "So my father would have me strip off my uniform because Morgan is somewhere near. I never expected such advice from Colonel Shackelford."

"No, no Fred, I did not mean that; I would have you do nothing cowardly."

"I shall surely wear it now that Morgan is near," was Fred's answer. "But, father, when our resignations are accepted, we will both lay aside the uniforms."

Colonel Shackelford remained silent a moment,

and then said: "I am a little like you, Fred; to lay aside my uniform now would seem almost an act of cowardice, and in my case, one of treachery to the South."

Fred did not desire to pursue the conversation further. The news that he had heard depressed him; so excusing himself, he went to his room.

Colonel Shackelford sat musing a long time after his son left him. What he had heard had worked a transformation in him. He felt the blood surging through his veins; all his soldierly instincts were aroused, and he longed to be at the head of his regiment once more.

"It's cowardly—cowardly," he muttered, "to resign now, just as the war may be surging around my very door."

Then thoughts of Fred came to him—the son he had disowned—the son who had saved his life, and been forgiven.

"If I go back to service," he thought, "Nelson will get hold of Fred again. The wretch! I have a heavy account to settle with that traitor, if I ever meet him. If it had not been for him, Fred would not have been wearing that accursed uniform. But come what may, I shall never disown him again. He has proven too true a son. I am proud of him, proud of him, if he is fighting with the Yankees. Not eighteen yet, and a captain."

A short time afterwards the thump, thump, of his crutches was heard as he retired to his room.

The next morning as Colonel Shackelford sat on

the porch enjoying his cigar, the trampling of horses' feet coming up the turnpike was heard, and then the jingling of sabers. He thought nothing of it, as Federal cavalry was no uncommon sight. But he was startled when the troop wheeled into the yard, and as they came up the drive he saw they wore the slouched hats of Morgan's troopers. Cantering up before the porch, they formed into line, saluted; and their leader, a trim young lieutenant, sprang from his horse, and rushing up the steps, grasped the colonel's hand, shouting:

"How do, Uncle Dick? Awfully glad to see you! Surprised are you? I am with Morgan now. Oh! but we are having glorious times with the Yanks—making them dance, I tell you! Morgan is the greatest man on earth—greater than Jeff Davis and Beauregard rolled into one. Uncle, you ought to be with us. It would do your heart good to—"

"Hold on, Cal," broke in Colonel Shackelford, "let me get a word in edgewise. I am glad to see you. What have you been doing?"

"Doing?" shouted Cal, "we have been smiting the Philistines, vulgarly called Yanks, 'hip and thigh,' as the Bible would say. The deviltry we have done—why, uncle, it would astonish you. We have thrown trains off the tracks, torn up railroads, burnt bridges and warehouses, captured wagon trains, and taken prisoners until we are tired of paroling the cowardly wretches."

"Enough, Cal. Now where are you going?"

"Going back to Tennessee. The chase is get-

ting a little too lively for comfort. We did think a little of taking Lexington, but even Yankees can become a little too numerous. I reckon there are about ten thousand after us, but they are all running here and there—everywhere but the right place—under Morgan's orders. Jerusalem! but it's enough to make a horse laugh to see how they swallow Morgan's telegrams."

Just then Fred, who had been in his room writing letters, hearing the noise, came out to see what was the matter. When Calhoun saw him, he stopped his harangue, turned pale, then flushed with anger. It was the first time the cousins had seen each other since their terrible meeting in a stable, when Fred wrung from Calhoun the promise of silence under the threat of instant death to both. Fred was the first to recover from surprise.

"Why, Cal, old boy," he said cheerily, extending his hand, "I am glad to see you. Where in the world did you drop from?"

Calhoun hesitated, then took the proffered hand and said in a low voice: "In the name of the prophet! why did you show yourself in that uniform?"

But it was too late to retreat. Calhoun's troopers had noticed the uniform, and were shouting:

"A Yank! A Yankee captain! Take him in, Lieutenant, he is your meat."

"Gentlemen, comrades!" cried Colonel Shackelford, alarmed, and he arose and steadied himself on his crutches. "A word with you, if you please."

"Hurrah for Colonel Shackelford! Hear Colonel

Shackelford!" shouted one of the men, and three cheers were given with a will.

"I thank you, comrades," said the Colonel, when the cheering had subsided, "but what I want to say is this: This supposed Federal captain is my son. I am sorry to say he was a captain in the Federal army, but am glad to inform you he is so no more; he has resigned."

"What does he wear them duds for, then?" demanded a hoarse voice.

"Let him take off them Lincoln rags, if he wants us to let him alone," shouted a chorus of voices, and a perfect babel arose.

Calhoun turned to his men and raised his hand. At once there was silence.

"Boys," he exclaimed, "this is my cousin, Captain Shackelford, who once took me prisoner in fair fight, but let me go, because I was his cousin. Some of you know the story of Colonel Shackelford, how he fell at Shiloh desperately wounded, fighting among the bravest of the brave. He would have died on the field if he had not been discovered by his son, and nursed back to life and health. For the sake of his father, he has given up an honorable military career. As you have been told, he has resigned from the army. As for the uniform, no doubt he wears it not because he is proud of it, but you must remember this portion of the country is in the hands of the Yankees, and it enables him to give a better protection to his father and the property."

Fred sprang forward, his face flaming with anger. That he had been placed in such an unpatriotic and ignoble light, aroused his indignation, and he was about to enter a fierce denial, when Calhoun caught him by the arm, and whispered warningly in his ear: "Keep still, you fool; go into the house, and all will be well; I am going to withdraw my men."

"Never, Cal! I would rather be shot than have them think true what you said of me. I wear the uniform because I love it; because it represents the right—"

Here he was interrupted by a second company of Morgan's men, who came galloping up to the house, led by no less a personage than Captain P. C. Conway. Noticing Fred, he shouted:

"A prize, boys, a prize! Take that Yankee captain, dead or alive."

Calhoun drew his sword, and springing in front of Fred, exclaimed: "Back! back! every one of you. Captain Shackelford is my prisoner; he has just surrendered to me."

"Stand aside, Lieutenant Pennington, or it will be the worse for you," exclaimed Conway, white with passion. "Stand aside, I say. I am your superior officer; disobey me at your peril. I have an account to settle with that traitor and spy, and I propose to settle it in my own way."

"The first man who lays hands on him, except by my command, dies," replied Calhoun, sheathing his sword and drawing a revolver.

"Sergeant, arrest Lieutenant Pennington," com-

manded Conway, turning to one of his men; "arrest him for mutiny, and kill him if he resists."

There was a murmur of dissent from Calhoun's command, and they made a movement as if they would defend their officer. As for the sergeant, he did not move.

"Are you going to obey?" thundered Conway, drawing his sword.

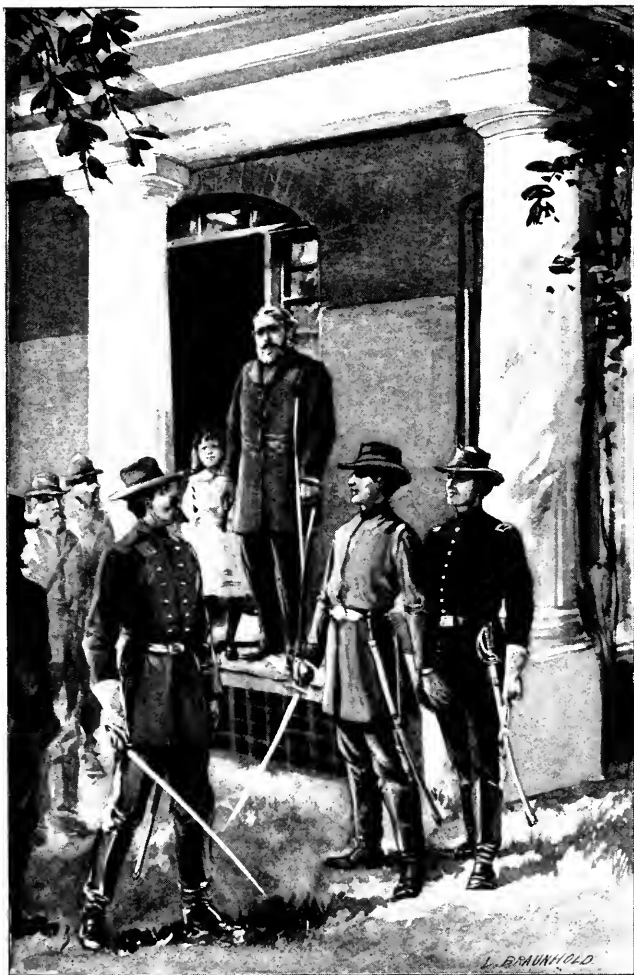
But another interruption was at hand. During the exciting scene enacted before his eyes Colonel Shackelford had sat as pale as death, but without saying a word. Drawn by the sound of the tumult, Belle had come on the porch, and stood by her father, gazing on the faces of the excited men in terror.

Her father bent toward her and whispered in her ear. She nodded, and was gone as quick as a flash. In a moment she returned, and placed a large navy revolver in her father's hand.

Colonel Shackelford arose, and steadying himself on his crutch, said in a clear, firm voice, "Your attention a moment, comrades."

The uproar ceased; every eye was on Colonel Shackelford.

"Comrades," he began, without the least show of excitement, "if my son is rightfully a prisoner of war, I shall be the last one to oppose the just claims of his captors, or do aught against our beloved South. Captain Conway claims my son as his prisoner not from motives of patriotism, but from those of revenge. He cannot have him. I



"Your Attention a Moment, Comrades," said Colonel Shackelford.

here deliver my son into the custody of Lieutenant Pennington, his rightful captor, who will conduct him to Colonel Morgan. It will be for Morgan to say whether my son shall be held or paroled as a prisoner of war. Now, Captain Conway, a word to you. I have no quarrel with you, but I shall see that from malice you do not dishonor the sword you wear. I am a colonel in the Confederate service. As such I order you to take your company and leave my premises inside of two minutes."

The colonel stopped; the situation was dramatic. Conway was trembling with baffled rage, and hesitated about obeying the order.

"Do you hear?" said Colonel Shackelford quietly, and those nearest him heard the lock of his revolver click.

Conway turned, spoke to one of his officers, and in a moment more the command filed out of the yard.

"Now, Lieutenant," said the colonel to Calhoun, "do your duty. Take Captain Shackelford to Morgan and tell him the facts."

Without another word he picked up his other crutch and made his way into the house.

Calhoun's troop gave a wild cheer. The coolness, the firmness, as well as the justness of the battered warrior had won their hearts. They would have carried Fred safe to Morgan, if they had had to wade through blood.

That night Morgan's command rendezvoused at Crab Orchard. They were in the highest spirits,

as they were now comparatively safe from pursuit. Calhoun's troop was one of the last to report.

"Ah, Lieutenant," said Morgan, as Calhoun presented himself with his prisoner, "whom have you here? Fred Shackelford, as I live! Well, you young scapegrace, what deviltry have you been up to now?"

"None at all, Colonel," replied Fred, coolly; "ever since Shiloh, I have been at home caring for my father."

"Good!" exclaimed Morgan; "it would be better for you, my boy, if you were such a man as your father."

Then turning to Calhoun, he said, "Why didn't you parole him, Lieutenant, and leave him with his father?"

"Because, Colonel, there was a misunderstanding."

"A misunderstanding—how?"

Calhoun related all the circumstances, concealing nothing. Morgan listened frowningly, and when Calhoun had finished he said to Basil Duke, "Make out a parole for Captain Shackelford."

"But, Colonel, I protest," interrupted Conway, who had joined the group around Morgan. "Fred Shackelford is no common prisoner; he is not only a traitor, but a spy."

"A traitor?" asked Morgan; "how do you make that out?"

Conway hesitated. "He is a spy, anyway, and should suffer the fate of one," he answered, sullenly.

"Where is your proof that he is a spy?"

"Why, Colonel," stammered Conway, "you surely have not forgotten how he spied on us at Louisville, at Georgetown, at Lexington, and how he threw Buckner's train off the track?"

Morgan looked amused, and said: "You seem to forget, Captain, that none of us were in the Confederate service at the time you mention. As for throwing Buckner's train off the track, if I mistake not, we have been engaged slightly in that kind of business ourselves. In fact, Captain, if that is a hanging offense, you had better not let the Yankees get hold of you."

This was in the nature of a compliment to Conway, for he had acquired considerable notoriety by capturing two or three trains of cars. He was diplomat enough to see that it would not be policy to press the matter further with his chief, so he lightly remarked, "As you please, Colonel, but I really think the fellow ought to be hanged."

He managed to whisper to Fred, as he passed him: "We will meet again, young man. My revenge is only postponed."*

After Fred's parole was made out, he was no longer considered as an enemy, but a friend. He received an invitation to stay in camp all night as a guest of his cousin, and he gladly accepted. During the evening an officer of the command sauntered up to Fred, and said: "Captain, I reckon we have met before. You are the boy who ran over me at Lebanon."

*See "General Nelson's Scout," by the same author.

"Mr. Mathews, I believe," replied Fred, smiling.

"The same, at your service, Captain. Say, have you got that hoss yet?"

"Yes; but I thought it hardly safe to ride him down here among you fellows. You know a good horse too well, when you see one."

Mathews chuckled. "Right you are, Captain. Don't you know I took a great fancy to that hoss. I am sorry I did not make you a friendly call, instead of my friend Conway there. I should have left you and compromised on the hoss. Captain, when I visit Kentucky again, I will call around and take him."

"All right, Captain," replied Fred, jokingly. "I will try to give you a hearty welcome."

"Do you hear that, gentlemen?" spoke up Mathews. "He has given his consent. Thank you, Captain, thank you," and he sauntered away.

There was a hearty laugh at Fred's expense, and one of the soldiers cried, "I will bet a five that Jim Mathews will have that hoss in less than sixty days."

"Taken!" yelled one of Calhoun's company, and the stakes were placed in the hands of a grizzled old sergeant.

"Fred," said Calhoun, "you will have to place a double guard around Prince."

But Fred looked upon the whole thing as a huge joke. Little did he think that in a few hours the soldier would have won his bet.

Fred stayed with Calhoun all night, heard from

his lips the story of some of Morgan's wonderful exploits, and the two parted in the morning as of old—sworn friends.

On his return home he received a warm welcome from his father, who seemed to be greatly pleased over the treatment his son had received from Morgan.

“Paroled, are you?” he said. “Well, I am glad of it; you can't fight now, even if Nelson wants you.”

CHAPTER VI.

CAPTAIN MATHEWS GETS PRINCE.

IF Fred could have heard a conversation which took place between Captain Mathews and two of his men the evening after his release, he would have been a frightened boy—frightened not for himself, but for the safety of his horse.

Morgan's first stopping place after he left Crab Orchard was Somerset. No sooner had the raiders gone into camp than Mathews sent for two of his most trustworthy and daring soldiers.

"Colvin and Rains," said the captain, calling them by name, "I have sent for you to see if you would undertake a difficult and perhaps dangerous job for me."

"Tell us what it is, Captain, and we are your men," answered Colvin.

"Did you hear me talking with that young Captain Shackelford last evening?"

"Yes, Captain. That was a mighty fine hoss he was ridin'. Many of the boys have bin wonderin' why Morgan didn't take him. He don't miss many such chances."

"The hoss belonged to the boy's father, who is a Confederate colonel. But the boy has a finer

hoss; I have had my eye on him for a year. You heard what he said last night to me about the hoss."

"Yes; rather bantered you; much as told you to get the hoss if you could."

"Well, Jim Mathews never takes any such banter. I mean to have that hoss."

"But how, Captain? We air a good fifty miles from whar the hoss is."

"That is what I want you two boys for. I want you to sneak back and steal that hoss. I believe you can."

The men looked at each other a moment, and then Colvin replied: "Gad! Captain, we will try it. Only let us take the one the boy had at Crab Orchard, too. We both want good horses to ride back."

"All right. Colonel Shackelford should not object to contributing one hoss to the Confederacy."

In a short time Colvin and Rains, mounted on two of the poorest horses in the company, rode away in the darkness. To all queries as to where they were going their only answer was, "On a secret expedition for the captain."

The two men did not take the road over which Morgan retreated. They would be sure of meeting pursuing Federal cavalry. Instead they rode well to the left, and then took unfrequented roads. By so doing they found no difficulty in making their way back.

Prince, Fred's horse, was dearer to him than the

apple of his eye. So intelligent was he, that Fred declared he knew more than many persons; in fact, the horse could detect the presence of an enemy much quicker than his owner, and more than once he had saved his master from being captured. Since Fred's return from the army, owing to the troublesome condition of the country, he had had Prince's stable guarded, and every precaution taken for the horse's safety. It was his practice to go to the stable every night before he retired, to see that his favorite was well cared for and that his orders were being obeyed.

On the third evening after his return from Crab Orchard, as he was making his usual visit to the stable, he was startled to meet Dave, the colored hostler, staggering toward the house, his face covered with blood. The poor fellow managed to gasp, "Prince gone," and fell insensible.

Calling for help, Fred ordered him to be carried into the house, and then rushed to the stable. Sure enough, Prince was gone, and with him Blenheim, the horse he had ridden to Crab Orchard. Fred was nearly beside himself with grief and anger; but nothing could be learned until Dave recovered consciousness. He had received a terrible blow on the head; only the thickness of his skull had saved him from instant death. It was some hours before he recovered sufficiently to tell his story. He was caring for the horses, before retiring for the night, when he heard a noise behind him, and as he turned to see what it was, he received a blow which rendered

him senseless. When consciousness returned, the horses were gone. During the day he thought he had seen two men skulking through a field of corn which came close up to the stable. That was all he knew.

Nothing could be done until morning, and by that time the thieves would be miles away. It looked as if Prince was hopelessly lost. With the light of day came the discovery of two abandoned horses which showed the effects of hard riding. Fastened in the mane of one of them was a note. Fred opened it, and to his surprise read:

CAPTAIN FREDERICK SHACKELFORD, U.S. ARMY.

My Dear Captain,—Owing to pressing business in Tennessee, instead of coming myself for that horse you promised me, I have concluded to send two of my men for him. I trust they will be most hospitably received, and their visit made a pleasant one. If my men should happen to take another horse, tell the Colonel, your father, it is for the Confederacy.

JAMES MATHEWS, Captain,
Morgan's Command.

"Well, that's cool, to say the least," remarked Fred, as he read the note. Then he sat down to think. His resolution was soon taken; he would have Prince back, or perish in the attempt.

Returning to the house, he showed his father the note, and then quietly said, "I am going to have that horse back."

"Fred! Fred! What do you mean?" asked the colonel, alarmed.

"I mean I am going after Prince. Do you think I will let Jim Mathews get away with him?"

"What can you do alone chasing Morgan, when the whole Federal army can't catch him?"

"I can catch Morgan much easier alone than with a brigade of soldiers; that is, I can gain his camp. I will then have to work some plan to get Prince away."

"But think of the danger. Don't go, Fred," pleaded the colonel.

"Father, please do not try to dissuade me. My mind is fully made up. Follow Morgan I shall, and being alone, I do not believe the danger will be as great as you think."

The colonel groaned. "I shall not have a minute's peace while you are gone," he said.

"Don't worry, father; I expect to be back in a week or ten days, and I'll bring Prince with me."

The colonel shook his head. "More likely," he said, sadly, "I shall hear of your being shot, or perhaps captured and hung as a spy."

Fred still had the disguise that he wore on his trip to Georgetown and Lexington the year before, and when he had fully prepared for his adventure even the colonel did not know him, and Belle asked her father in a whisper who that strange boy was, fleeing in terror when Fred asked her for a kiss.

Taking one of the horses discarded by the thieves, he started on his journey. Avoiding all main roads, so as not to meet any Federal cavalry, he made direct for Tennessee. During his journey he represented himself as one of Morgan's men who had been taken prisoner, but escaped. While at Crab

Orchard he had learned from Calhoun the names of many of Morgan's officers, therefore could answer leading questions asked him.

Southern sympathizers gave him all aid and information in their power, and he found no trouble in learning the route Morgan had taken. When he crossed over the line into Tennessee he learned that Morgan was operating near Gallatin. He now had to be more careful, and after two or three very narrow escapes he decided to abandon his horse and take to the woods and fields. He was now not only alone, but on foot and surrounded by enemies; yet he never faltered.

When about seven miles north of Gallatin he thought he heard the sound of firing. Listening intently, he soon became satisfied that an engagement was in progress. Cautiously making his way through a wood, he gained an elevation from which he could overlook the theater of strife. Before him stretched the Louisville & Nashville Railway, which in its course passed through a high hill by means of a tunnel. This tunnel was defended by a strong blockhouse, which was surrounded by a detachment of Morgan's command, and the firing was brisk. As there was no artillery being used, Fred saw no reason why the blockhouse should not hold out indefinitely; but to his intense disgust the white flag was soon run up.

No sooner had the blockhouse surrendered than with whoops and hurrahs the Confederates began to tear up the railroad. A train of flat cars which

had been captured was loaded with wood and rails, set on fire, and run into the tunnel, which soon became a raging furnace.

Cautiously creeping nearer, Fred, with the aid of his field-glass, which he had with him, had no trouble in distinguishing Mathews, Conway and his cousin as being in the party, and his heart beat hard and fast when he saw that Mathews was riding Prince, while Captain Conway was mounted on Blenheim. The object of his search had been found; what to do next was the question.

Fred's plan of campaign was soon formed. The destruction of the tunnel completed, the command would naturally return to Gallatin. He crawled back out of sight, and then started as fast as he could run toward Gallatin. After going about two miles, he crossed the road leading to that city, so as to be on the west side. "If I get possession of Prince," he mused, "I can never return the way I came. I must try to reach Nashville. I can do it in four or five hours of hard riding, and I must be on the Nashville side of the road."

Carefully examining the lay of the ground as he passed along, he came to a place which caused him to cry out for joy.

"If made on purpose it couldn't be better," he exclaimed.

The road to Gallatin ran through a wood, and at the place where Fred stopped it was crossed by another road, which turned abruptly a few yards beyond the crossing to avoid a hill, thus enabling



Fred heard the Shouts and Laughter of the Men. They were coming.

one to stand in this road but a short distance from the Gallatin road, and yet be entirely concealed from those passing along the latter. As Fred said, if the place had been made for his purpose, it could not have been improved.

"If they come this way, Prince is mine," he whispered joyfully to himself, and he carefully examined his revolver to see that it was in order.

He waited until he began to despair, thinking they had gone some other way; but no, from up the road he heard the trampling of horses, then the shouts and laughter of the men. *They were coming.*

Fred's face burned as with fire; his heart beat like a trip hammer. The column came in view, Mathews and Conway riding at the head. Both were in the highest spirits, and were laughing and talking. Fred raised his revolver, then his hand dropped. "I can't do it," he said to himself; "it's too much like cold-blooded murder. I will try the other plan. It will be all right if Prince can unhorse him; if not, it will be time enough to use my pistol."

The head of the column had reached the cross-road. A low, tremulous whistle, more like the faint note of a bird than anything else, vibrated through the woods. Prince stopped, threw up his head, and stood as if listening intently. Then came a sharp, piercing whistle as keen as the cut of a sword.

Prince gave a prodigious bound, wheeled, reared,

and then darted up the crossroad. So sudden and unexpected was the movement that Mathews, although a splendid horseman, was thrown violently to the ground. A few bounds took the horse to where Fred stood. But now an unexpected incident occurred. Blenheim, seeing Prince go, bolted and followed, in spite of the efforts of Conway to hold him. Therefore, just as Fred was going to vault into the saddle, Blenheim and his rider appeared on the scene. There was no help for it; Fred leveled his revolver to shoot. Conway saw his danger, and threw himself from his horse, but not in time to escape a bullet in his shoulder. In a trice Fred was on Prince's back and away, followed by the now riderless Blenheim.

As for the Confederates, so suddenly had everything happened that they stood for a moment irresolute. Three or four sprang from their horses to assist Mathews, who was trying to struggle to his feet.

"Oh, oh!" he groaned. "My arm is broken! What scared that cursed horse?"

Then came the sharp report of Fred's revolver as he fired at Conway. A score of men spurred down the road, nearly riding over the prostrate captain. They caught sight of Fred, and a dozen carbines cracked, but without effect, and several dashed on in pursuit.

In the mean time Conway had been assisted to his feet, and was helped back, bleeding freely from the wound in the shoulder.

"What was it? Who was it? Were there more than one?" were the questions showered on him.

He only knew he was confronted by a dark-haired boy, who had a pistol leveled on him, and to save himself he had thrown himself from his horse, but not in time to avoid the ball.

"It must have been young Shackelford," said Mathews; "the horse knew the whistle."

"But Shackelford hasn't black hair and a dark skin," groaned Conway. Then he exclaimed: "Fiends of darkness! It was that young devil after all. That is the disguise he wore when he spied on us at Georgetown and Lexington. Curse him! I will have him yet."

"I almost wish Morgan had let you hang him," groaned Mathews, tenderly caressing his broken arm. "But, Conway, the sooner you and I get to Gallatin the better."

Two of the men dismounted and gave their horses to the wounded officers. By this time part of the pursuing party had returned, only those who rode the swiftest horses continuing the chase.

"They will never catch him; they might as well come back," growled Mathews.

When the command reached Gallatin, and Mathews had his arm set and Conway his wound dressed, they felt a little more reconciled, Conway being told that his wound was not severe.

When Morgan heard the story he smiled, and said: "Perhaps it was a good thing for you, Mathews, after all. You have bragged so much

about getting that horse that we were all getting disgusted."

"All right, Colonel," replied Mathews; "I reckon I have blowed considerable about that hoss. I don't bear the boy any ill-will, like Conway; it was a mighty smart trick, that of his, but I will have that hoss yet. See if I don't."

With Conway the feeling was different. The incident, if possible, intensified his hatred for Fred tenfold, and he swore if the boy ever fell into his hands he would have his revenge, come what would.

Later in the day the last of the pursuing party returned, reporting utter failure in their attempt to overtake the fugitive.

As for Fred, the success of his plan filled him with exultation. Once more he was on the back of his beloved steed, and it was all he asked. For nearly ten miles he kept up his tremendous pace. The few inhabitants along the road gazed in wonder as the curious cavalcade went thundering past. It looked as if Vengeance in the shape of a riderless horse was pursuing the slayer of his master; and more than one country bumpkin solemnly declared that the last horse was not riderless; that in the saddle, urging him on, was a spectral figure, the head a grinning skull, and out of the fleshless mouth and nostrils came smoke and fire, while the bony arm upheld a flaming sword.

At last, hearing no sound, nor seeing any signs of pursuit, Fred reined in his horse. His glossy coat reeked with sweat, and great flecks of foam streaked

with blood, dripped from his nostrils. Dismounting under the shade of a tree, Fred caressed Prince as gently as if he were a beautiful maiden, speaking to him in the most endearing terms. As for Prince, he fairly quivered with joy, and whinnying with delight, rubbed his nose affectionately against his master.

All this time Blenheim stood by trembling in every limb, and Fred saw that he was not only badly winded, but that the loose stirrups had cut and bruised his sides.

"Poor Blenheim! good horse!" said Fred, patting his head. "You were not going to be left behind, were you? I owe you one for getting rid of that fellow Conway. I will relieve you, old fellow," and he removed the saddle from the horse's back, so the stirrups could no longer hurt him.

When Fred had given the horses a good rest, he went on at a more leisurely pace. "There is no use of hurrying, Prince, my boy, unless we scent danger, is there?" he said.

Fred always talked to Prince as though the horse could understand every word, and always maintained that he could.

From the direction of the road he was traveling Fred concluded he would come out on the Nashville and Bowling Green turnpike, several miles north of its junction with the Gallatin pike. He had learned the way the turnpikes ran during his ride with Bailie Peyton the year before. After traveling several miles farther he reached the top of

a rather high hill. Before him lay a beautiful valley, and through it, like a great white serpent, wound the Nashville and Bowling Green turnpike. But what interested him more was a body of soldiers, who in the distance looked like so many ants crawling along, and they were creeping to the northward.

Were they friends or foes? He could not tell at that distance. As he approached nearer, he could distinguish cavalry, artillery, and infantry. At last he could distinguish the colors, and they bore the stars and stripes.

"They are Union troops, Prince, my boy!" he shouted. "We are safe. Hello! I reckon I shouted too soon."

This remark was called forth by the discovery of a small body of Confederate horse between himself and the Federal troops. But even as he looked, a company of cavalry from the marching column deployed and charged the Confederates, who came flying back in hot haste.

Fred quickly sought shelter in a clump of trees, and the Confederates passed him at full gallop. They were in too great a hurry to notice particularly what stood by the side of the road.

"Jerusalem! What have we coming here?" This question was asked as Fred approached, by a Federal corporal, who had been left with a squad of cavalry to guard the road until the column had passed.

"Halt there!" exclaimed the corporal, as Fred drew near. The command was at once obeyed.

"Who are you, and where are you going?" next asked the corporal.

"I am a Federal officer, escaping from Morgan," was Fred's answer.

"Well, all I have to say," replied the corporal, "you are a queer looking specimen for an officer. Do you always take an extra horse with you?"

"Not always," answered Fred. "But, say, are you going to keep me waiting here all day?"

"Oh! come on, horses and all; we can take care of you."

Just then an officer rode up, and ordered the corporal to fall in the rear guard with his men. The officer, a lieutenant, in command of the rear guard, looked at Fred rather contemptuously as the corporal made his report.

"Who did you say you were?" asked the lieutenant, superciliously.

"An officer of the United States army," replied Fred, coolly.

"An officer of the United States army?" sneered the lieutenant. "What is your name and rank?"

"Captain Frederick Shackelford, late of General Nelson's staff."

The lieutenant started in surprise. "You," he exclaimed, "you Captain Shackelford, Nelson's famous scout? Now I know you are lying. I was with Nelson on his march from Nashville to Shiloh and saw Captain Shackelford every day. You look about as much like him as a donkey looks like a

horse. You have trapped yourself nicely, young man; General Nelson is with this column."

Before Fred recovered from his surprise on hearing that Nelson commanded the column, the lieutenant, who had been looking Prince over carefully, exclaimed:

"Great heavens! that is the horse Captain Shackelford used to ride. I know him well; the horse was as famous as his master. Corporal, arrest this fellow at once. I believe Captain Shackelford has been murdered, and this spy thought to personate him. Boy, if you have made away with Shackelford, I wouldn't give a straw for your life. Nelson never was an angel, and he is in a terrible temper to-day."

"Take me to him, and I will answer for the consequences," replied Fred.

But the lieutenant was going to take no chances. Fred was deprived of his arms and closely guarded. As a prisoner he was conducted into the presence of his old commander.

The column had halted to rest, and they found Nelson in company with Generals Manson and Cruft sitting in the shade of a tree. Before the lieutenant could open his mouth to make his report, Nelson sprang to his feet, and reaching out his hand, exclaimed, "Captain Shackelford, how came you here, and in your old disguise?"

"Let's get out of here," whispered the lieutenant to the corporal who had Fred in charge, and they

retired, the soldier grinning broadly over the officer's discomfiture.

Fred, in as few words as possible, told his story. Nelson listened in silence, and when he had finished said:

"I would give my right hand if I could capture Morgan. He is doing us more harm than all the rest of the Rebel army put together. We have no general who seems to be able to cope with him."

The march was resumed, and Fred, riding by the general's side, related to him all that had happened since Shiloh.

Nelson then said: "I still have your resignation in my pocket. I am loath to accept it. I now need your services more than ever, since I am going back to Kentucky. I do not want to go back; I remonstrated against it in the strongest terms, but Buell would not take 'No' for an answer. Things are in a bad way. The whole State is in confusion; and the central portion is wild with fear over the reported invasion of Kirby Smith."

"But, General, you can surely straighten things out if any one can."

"That's the rub, Fred. I doubt if any one can. You have no idea how things have gone since Shiloh. Halleck made the gigantic blunder of the war by not moving on Corinth rapidly. He had enough men to eat Beauregard up. Then came that magnificent campaign—on paper—in which Buell was to capture Chattanooga and invade East Tennessee. It was dished by Halleck's order to

reconstruct a railroad of no earthly use. Now Buell seems utterly at a loss as to what Bragg will do, and is flying around like a chicken with its head cut off. I can think of nothing else. No one seems able to grasp the situation unless it is General Thomas, and he is too modest to push his views. Mark my words, the whole army will be back to the Ohio before many weeks."

"Oh! no, General; it cannot be as bad as that," replied Fred.

"Yes, full as bad as that. See how Morgan and Forrest ride around us at pleasure. The railroad is a mass of ruins, and it will take weeks to repair it. The soldiers in front are suffering for lack of food, and the conditions will grow worse."

Here Nelson relapsed into silence, and Fred noticed that his face looked sadder than he had ever seen it before. It was some time before he spoke again, and then he suddenly said:

"Fred, I believe I am getting superstitious. I feel that I am going back to my death—certainly to some great misfortune. A black cloud is before me, the darkness of which I cannot pierce."

"You must get rid of such gloomy thoughts, General. I trust you are going back to win even greater honor and glory than ever before. The opportunity will be before you."

"God grant it," replied the general solemnly; for despite his roughness, Nelson had a belief in Providence.

"Fred," he resumed, very earnestly, "you must

take back your resignation. I need you. You even improve my temper when you are around."

"General, you forget I am a prisoner on parole."

"That is so. I will see that you are exchanged at the first opportunity."

"I have promised my father to leave the army if he will."

"But your father has not left the army yet. He may not. This invasion of Kentucky may alter everything."

"In that case, General, I will see. God knows I should like to be with you."

At Bowling Green the party took the cars for Louisville. Hugh Raymond was with Nelson, and Fred did not forget to congratulate him on his sergeant's stripes.

"And they were fairly won," said the general, when asked about Hugh.

General Nelson did not tarry at Louisville. Kirby Smith had already entered the State, and Nelson started for Lexington to organize an army to meet him.

Fred sold Blenheim for a big price to a Federal officer in Louisville.

"I hate to treat you so meanly, old fellow," said Fred, as he bade him good-bye, "but it is getting dangerous to keep good horses in Kentucky."

At Lexington Fred left General Nelson, promising to see him again as soon as possible. He saw him sooner than he thought for, and under circumstances both of them little expected.

CHAPTER VII.

THE BATTLE OF RICHMOND.

IT was a joyful welcome that Fred received when he reached home.

"Thank God that I see you again, my dear boy!" said Colonel Shackelford, with deep emotion, as he grasped his hand. "I have not had an easy moment since you left."

"Well, father," exclaimed Fred, gayly, "here I am safe and sound, and what is more, I have brought Prince with me."

"Brought Prince with you!" cried the colonel. "How in the world did you get him, Fred? If any one ever went on a wild goose chase, I thought you did; and even despaired of your coming out alive."

"It was a much easier job than you think," replied Fred; and then he gave his father a full history of his trip.

"Wonderful! wonderful!" exclaimed Colonel Shackelford. "Prince certainly deserves some of the credit. He is a remarkable horse, and does credit to your training. But you say Blenheim bolted and followed. Did you kill Conway?"

"No, I think he escaped with a wound. He threw himself from the horse so quickly that he dis-

concerted my aim. The villain has more presence of mind than I ever gave him credit for."

"It may be for the best," said his father; "but you have cause to fear that man as long as he is alive. He is one that never forgets or forgives. I am now afraid you have added Captain Mathews to the list of your enemies."

"Mathews shouldn't complain; he stole my horse, and I got him back."

"I hope he will not show the same spirit Conway does; but one thing is certain, Fred, you will have to lie low when Morgan is around. You say you sold Blenheim?"

"Yes; I hated to see him go, but a thousand dollars was a big price; and just now good horses are dangerous property in Kentucky."

"And will become more so if we are invaded by both armies, as it now appears we may be. I think I will send Stimson to the Louisville market with all the horses I can spare."

"I would do so, father, if I were you. Morgan is no respecter of persons when he wants a good horse; and if we are overrun by both armies, there will not be a horse left in the country."

"The advice is good, Fred. I will act upon it at once," replied the colonel; and then he continued, "So Nelson is back in Kentucky, is he—the arch traitor? He will be wanting you now sure."

"I am at least safe," answered Fred, with a smile, "until I am exchanged."

"That was a lucky thing, Morgan taking you,

after all. I am heartily glad you are a paroled prisoner. Fred, do you really believe that this part of the country will shortly become the theater of war?"

"I do, father. Nelson says the whole Federal army will be pushed clear back to Louisville. He is very despondent over the turn affairs have taken."

The colonel's eyes sparkled. He struck his crutch violently on the floor, and exclaimed: "And here I sit doing nothing, while the blows that will give freedom to the South are being struck. I feel like a craven wretch."

Fred looked at his father anxiously. He saw that the war fever was burning fiercely in his veins, and felt that all their plans of living in peace would vanish in thin air if the war wave should roll over central Kentucky. Like his father, if the strife came, he longed to be in it; so he said nothing to allay his excitement. Instead he said: "If there should be fighting around here, it would not be a good place for Belle. I believe she had better be sent back to school."

"A wise idea, Fred. There is no knowing how soon she may be left without a protector."

So the next day poor Belle, notwithstanding her tears and expostulations, was sent back to school; and much to Stimson's surprise, he was ordered to take all the horses that could be spared from the farm to Louisville and sell them.

In the mean time the rumors of the advance of Kirby Smith kept coming thick and fast. The

twenty-eighth of August came, and there was now no doubt that Kirby Smith with his army was nearing Richmond, and the Federal authorities were straining every nerve to meet the coming storm.

That evening Fred rode to Danville to see his uncle Judge Pennington, and hear the news. He found the city wild with excitement. The little garrison had been ordered to Lexington, and the Unionists of the place were dumb with surprise and filled with consternation. Many of the more prominent Union men were preparing to leave with the soldiers. Weeping wives clung around the necks of their husbands, not knowing whether they would ever see them again or not.

Hardly was the last soldier gone before Confederate flags began to fly from the houses of well-known Secessionists, and the suppressed feelings of months found expression in the wildest enthusiasm.

As for Judge Pennington, he was almost too happy to talk. He ran up the stars and bars, and made a fiery speech to the assembled mob, telling them their days of oppression were over; that hereafter Kentucky would be one of the brightest stars in the Confederacy. He was startled on seeing Fred in the crowd, wearing his Federal uniform. Already the crowd had noticed it, and cries began to be heard of "Strip it off of him!" "Hang the spy and traitor!"

"Come here, you young jackanapes!" roared the judge. "What do you mean by presenting yourself here in those rags?"

"Because I have a right to wear them," said Fred, firmly. "But I would inform the gentlemen here I am a paroled prisoner, and as such entitled to the protection of every brave man."

"Come in here; I want to talk with you," said the judge, and amid the howls and execrations of the mob, Fred coolly walked into the house. As the nephew of Judge Pennington and the son of Colonel Shackelford, Fred knew he was in no danger of violence.

"What do you think now of your beloved Union, Fred?" asked the judge. "Didn't I tell you it would be so? Kirby Smith is already knocking at our door. Bragg is on the way to drive Buell across the Ohio. The whole State will be ours in a few days. The star of the South is in the ascendant."

"You are mistaken, uncle," replied Fred, mischievously. "It's not a star you see; it's a rocket. It is going up brilliantly enough, but it will soon explode in mid-air, and come down ashes."

"Why! why! why!" roared the judge, angry that his favorite simile had been turned against him. "I have a mind to cane you for your impertinence. But tell me about your trip South; everybody is talking about it, and laughing that at least one person has got the better of Morgan."

So Fred had to tell the story, and then added, "You should be proud of Calhoun, uncle. Morgan told me he was one of his most valued officers—a little too reckless sometimes, but always ready for an adventure."

"I am proud of him. That raid of Morgan's was one of the most daring achievements of the war. Fred, Morgan took a fancy to you. You might have been a captain riding with him to-day if you hadn't played the fool and gone off with that traitor, Nelson."

"I am a captain now, uncle," said Fred, meekly.

"A captain, a captain of what?—of a lot of thieving Yankees!" replied the judge, scornfully. "But, Fred, we won't quarrel. I am feeling too happy. See that flag floating out there? It will never come down."

"Don't be too sure of that, uncle; but fly it while you can, for it will have to come down before many days."

"You dare tell me that?" exclaimed the judge, growing excited again. "I have a mind to ask you to tea, and see if you can't take a little sense through your stomach, if I can't beat any into your brain."

So Fred stayed to tea, and it was after dark before he started for home. When about a mile from his destination he was startled by being accosted by George, one of the faithful servants of the family. Fred drew Prince up so suddenly that he sat back on his haunches.

"Great heavens! George, what is it? Has anything happened to father?" he asked with quivering voice.

"Kunnel all right, but he say, 'Fo' God's sake, George, stop Massa Fred an' gib him dis;'" and

he handed Fred a note, adding, "Right smart Rebel sojers at home."

Fred leaped from his horse, and lighting a match, read: "Major Hockoday is here with a squadron of cavalry. Keep away until George tells you the coast is clear."

"George," said Fred, "father bids me stay from home until the Rebel soldiers go. You will find me under the large tree which stands close to the gate opening into the pasture. Let me know as soon as they go."

"Yes, massa, George will come as soon as he can."

"What in the world can Major Hockoday want of my father?" thought Fred, as he took his station under the tree to await the coming of George. "It must be something about his return to the army."

Not only minutes but hours passed, still no George. Fred began to be very restless, and wore a path pacing back and forth. It was past midnight when he heard the low whistle, the signal agreed upon, given by George.

Fred answered the signal, and the negro at once appeared, and said, "Sogers gone; massa gone, too."

"What!" exclaimed Fred, in surprise.

"Massa gone; tuk carriage, Sam drove; Ned, he rode massa's saddle hoss. Go to Richmond. Sam and Ned drive carriage back."

That his father should go away so suddenly, without saying a word to him, cut Fred to the

heart. There must be some mystery about it. It was with conflicting emotions that he entered the house. The hollow echo of his footsteps seemed to mock him. Was this the home where he had spent so many happy days with his father, who said he freely forgave, and now had gone away without one word? He would not believe it; his father must have left a note somewhere. At last he found it on the table in the library. Breaking it open with trembling fingers, he read:

MY DEAR SON,—You will doubtless be surprised at my sudden departure without even a parting word with you. But as I must go, I feel this is best, for it will save us both much heartache. Shortly after you left, Major Hockoday rode up to the door, accompanied with a squadron of cavalry. You can imagine my surprise on seeing him. But I was more surprised when he handed me a commission as brigadier-general in the Confederate army; also a letter from General Kirby Smith, asking me to meet him at once, as he expected to attack the Federal force at Richmond, and had a brigade at my disposal. I felt that I could not prove false to the trust reposed in me, so made preparations to go at once.

God keep you, my son; even if you enter the army again there shall be no more estrangement between us. If we never meet again in this world, let us hope that at last we shall find peace with your dear mother in heaven.

Your affectionate father,

R. SHACKELFORD.

To understand fully General Shackelford's note, let us see what occurred after Fred left for Danville. About dark he was startled by having a squadron of Confederate cavalry ride up to the house, and was agreeably surprised to find in the commander, Major Hockoday, an old acquaintance. But he was

more than surprised when Major Hockoday, in shaking hands with him, said:

"General Shackelford, it makes me happy to see you looking so well; also allow me to congratulate you."

"Major," answered Colonel Shackelford, "it's like renewing my youth to see you. Where in the world did you come from? But you have made a great mistake in my rank. I am not a general, and there is no likelihood of my ever being one."

"Pardon me, General, but allow me to differ with you; read this," and the major handed him a formidable-looking document.

Colonel Shackelford took the document, opened it, but before he read far, the paper dropped from his astonished hands. It was a commission from Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States, as brigadier-general of volunteers. With it was a personal letter, stating that the commission was granted for gallantry on the field of Shiloh, where his regiment held in check the last fearful charge of the enemy, thus enabling Beauregard to withdraw his army in safety. The letter also stated that he had been regularly exchanged, and was therefore free to report for duty at any time.

Another letter was enclosed from General Kirby Smith, saying he had a brigade at his disposal; that he expected to attack Richmond the next day, and hoped the general would report at once.

Colonel, or as he must now be called, General Shackelford, was deeply moved by these tokens of

appreciation. Not only this, but he clearly saw it was his duty to accept the commission. It seemed as if fate were inexorably driving himself as well as Fred back into the army; it would be worse than folly to resist. So he wrote the note to Fred, found on the library table, and after a hurried preparation took his departure for Richmond.

Fred read his father's letter with a swelling heart. It showed that, come what might, there would be no more estrangement between them; that his father's love would always be his, and he shed happy tears over the fact.

"There is now nothing," thought he, "to prevent my joining Nelson, except that plaguy parole. If it were not for that I would join him to-morrow. I will go and see him, anyway; perhaps I can find out when I shall be exchanged."

With these thoughts he went to bed. The next day, Stimson, the overseer, returned from Louisville, where he had been to sell the horses. He had made a good sale, and was correspondingly happy. Great was his surprise to find Mr. Shackelford gone and Fred preparing to go.

"You will have to do without us again, John," said Fred. "If the country is overrun by the armies, as now seems probable, the farm may be devastated and everything portable taken away. It will do no good to object. Do the best you can, and do nothing to arouse the anger of either side."

"Will they take grain or provisions without paying?" asked Stimson in some surprise.

"They may pay you in vouchers, but under the circumstances, vouchers will be of little value from either side. We shall simply have to make up our minds to lose whatever is so taken."

"And you call that war, do you?" asked Stimson, with some indignation.

"The least part of it, John, the least part of it. War means not only robbery, but death."

Honest John Stimson went away shaking his head; to him such warfare was nothing more or less than robbery.

A short time afterwards Fred was surprised to see Hugh Raymond dash up to the door.

"Why, Hugh!" exclaimed Fred, extending his hand. "I am glad to see you; but what brings you here? You look as if you had ridden hard."

"I have," answered Hugh, "and I must ride harder. Here are orders from Nelson," and he handed Fred an official-looking envelope.

Fred hastily broke it open and read:

LEXINGTON, Aug. 28, 1862.

CAPTAIN FREDERICK SHACKELFORD,

Dear Sir:—This is to inform you that you have been regularly exchanged. You are therefore directed to report to me at Richmond at your earliest convenience.

WM. NELSON,

Major-General Commanding.

"Hugh," said Fred, "this is an order for me to report at Richmond. Is Nelson there?"

"No; but he starts from Lexington to-morrow morning for that place. Kirby Smith is advancing rapidly, and I have orders to General Manson, who

is in command at Richmond, to fall back if there is danger of his being attacked in force. Nelson will be in Richmond to-morrow to take command."

"Well, tell the general I will be there to-morrow," replied Fred. "But, Hugh, dismount, and rest yourself and horse."

"I can't, Fred; my orders are to hurry. If Manson don't get any dispatch, he may fight; and if he does, he will get whipped. Good-bye, Fred, till I see you," and turning, Hugh clapped spurs to his horse, and soon disappeared in a cloud of dust.

"So there is a prospect of a battle at Richmond," mused Fred. "Well, I will be there to bear my part."

Early the next morning Fred once more bade farewell to his home, and started for Richmond. When within about ten miles from his destination he thought he heard the sound of artillery. He stopped and listened. He was not mistaken. Faintly, like the echo of distant thunder, came the sullen roar of cannon. The battle was on. He urged his horse forward with greater speed, and soon the sounds of battle were heard distinctly. Prince felt the excitement as well as his master, and with head erect and eyes flashing, sprang forward, as if eager for the fray. When about five miles from Richmond, Fred, to his dismay, found himself cut off by a body of Confederate cavalry. Turning into a by-road, which led to the left, he dashed on. No less than three times did he attempt to reach Richmond, to find himself cut off,

and it was not until he reached the road which leads from Lexington to Richmond that he found the way clear.

Up this road came a solitary rider at full speed, his horse covered with foam and dust. As he drew near, Fred, to his surprise, recognized General Nelson. Sheridan rode twenty miles to turn defeat into victory at Cedar Creek. Nelson rode thirty miles to try to save his army at Richmond, but failed. When he saw Fred he drew rein, and exclaimed, "You here, Captain?"

"Yes, General, if I get into Richmond on this road, it will be the fourth time I have attempted it."

"Ah! you have been headed off by the Rebel cavalry like myself. I only reached this road by taking by-paths and crossroads."

Fred saw that he was greatly excited, and as the roar of battle came to their ears, Nelson shuddered, and said:

"Great God! I fear the worst. I sent orders to Manson not to fight, but to fall back toward Lancaster. What can he mean? But come, we have no time to waste."

They soon met fugitives from the battle, but in no great numbers. But as they entered Richmond, the scene became indescribable. The streets were packed with fleeing soldiers, wagons, teams, and caissons. Teamsters were yelling and cursing like maniacs, trying to force their way through. Wagons were being overturned, and the teamsters,

cutting their mules loose, would mount them and join the mass fleeing down the Lexington turnpike. But the roar of battle was still heard beyond Richmond.

"On! on!" cried Nelson. "All may not yet be lost."

Skirting around the struggling, yelling, shrieking, panic-stricken mass, they rode toward Rogersville. They passed numerous wounded men, struggling back, and some of them when they recognized their general, raised a feeble shout, but most of them hurried on, with only one thought—to get away.

After going about two miles they met the main army, coming back in utter rout. Nelson dashed in among them, pleading, cursing.

"It's your general, boys," he would shout. "We will lick them yet."

Here Hugh was met with General Manson, who was doing all he could to rally the men. Almost by superhuman efforts some twenty-five hundred of the men were rallied on the outskirts of the town near the cemetery.

"If we can hold them," groaned Nelson, "if we can hold them until night, I can get the army away."

On came the Confederate host like a mighty torrent, to break against the slender line and be flung back for a moment, and then roll on again.

As a strong dam at last gives way before the press of water, so did this dam of twenty-five hundred

men give away before the human torrent pressing against it. Then came demoralization, utter rout, insane fear.

Nelson forgot everything in his rage. Like a madman he spurred his horse into the terror-stricken mob.

"Poltroons! cowards!" he shrieked, and he struck with his sword right and left. But no human power could have stayed those affrighted men. They would have rushed into a death tenfold more fearful than that from which they were fleeing. Nelson was almost deserted; the enemy were pressing around him.

Fred saw his danger. "Fly, General! fly for your life!" he cried.

Nelson wheeled his horse, but as he turned a stalwart Confederate grabbed for the bridle-rein. A saber flashed in the air, and with a moan the man sank down, cleft through the skull.

"Well done, Hugh!" cried Fred, as he witnessed the gallant act.

Just then General Shackelford, riding in front of his brigade, leading them in their headlong charge, caught sight of Nelson. With a cry of rage he spurred his horse straight toward him. Before him he saw the man who, he believed, not only tore Kentucky from her rightful place in the Confederacy, but who had perverted his son and persuaded him to raise his sword against his kindred.

Nelson heard a warning cry, and turned his head to see General Shackelford by his side with sword



The Blade of the upraised Sword went twirling through
the Air.

uplifted, gathering strength for the fatal blow. He had no time to parry, no time to defend; but there came a sharp ring, and the blade of the upraised sword went twirling through the air, broken at the hilt. With a hoarse cry, General Shackelford threw down the shattered blade, and drew his revolver; but before he could shoot, a bullet pierced the brain of his steed, and horse and rider went down together.

His men saw their general fall, and a crashing volley rang out. Nelson reeled in his saddle, but kept his seat. Hugh Raymond's horse fell dead, pinning his rider to the earth. Fred was the only one of the party unhurt.

It was not until their horses had carried them out of danger that Fred noticed that one of Nelson's legs was covered with blood.

"General," he exclaimed anxiously, "you are wounded! Can I do anything for you?"

"I have been hit twice," responded Nelson, "but they are nothing but scratches. I must ride to Lexington; the army is totally routed. Oh, the disgrace of it! the cowards!" almost sobbed Nelson. "If I had only had my old Fourth Division here, it would have been different, but now—" and he broke down completely.

Fred never forgot that ride back to Lexington. Through the darkness of the night they rode, and never drew rein until the lights of the city appeared. Nelson was mostly silent, but once he suddenly turned to Fred and asked:

"Captain, is this the darkness I saw before me, or is worse coming? What can be worse, except death, and I thought it was death once, as well as defeat. Captain, did you see that officer with sword upraised over my head to strike? Just as I expected the stroke, I saw the blade go twirling through the air. What happened?"

Fred did not answer.

"Ah, Captain, you are silent; you saved my life. Tell me about it."

"There is not much to tell," replied Fred. "I saw the officer about to strike; the instant the sword stood motionless before the downward stroke, I fired and struck the blade just above the hilt. It snapped in two. Then he attempted to draw his revolver, and I killed his horse."

"Killed the horse," roughly asked Nelson, "why didn't you kill the rider, and let the horse go?"

"Because," replied Fred, in a low voice, "the officer was my father."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DEATH OF GENERAL NELSON.

BACK to Lexington poured the fugitives from the battle of Richmond. Out of six thousand five hundred Federal troops that faced the Confederates on that fatal field, only eight hundred escaped. Over eleven hundred lay dead and wounded; the rest were prisoners. Among these prisoners was Hugh Raymond. Before he could release himself from his fallen horse the enemy were upon him, and he had to surrender.

The results of the battle of Richmond were far-reaching. Lexington was evacuated, the whole of central Kentucky given up, and a mad rush for Louisville and Cincinnati followed.

The hardships of that retreat will never be forgotten by those who endured them. The summer had been very dry. Great clouds of stifling dust arose over the marching columns, filling mouth and nostrils to suffocation. Not only the small streams, but good-sized rivers were dry, and the sufferings of the men because of the want of water were terrible. Many a canteen was filled from ponds covered with filthy green scum, and in some of these ponds carcasses of animals were festering.

Many a time on the retreat Fred's heart bled as he saw mere boys lying exhausted, fainting by the side of the road. Most of the regiments were new, and the men unaccustomed to the hardships of the march. It is safe to say that of the new troops that entered Kentucky in the summer and fall of 1862 nearly one-half were dead or disabled by sickness in less than six months.

When it became known that the Federal forces had been defeated at Richmond and were in full retreat for Louisville and Cincinnati, the excitement throughout Indiana and Ohio was intense. It was expected that Kirby Smith would at once move on Cincinnati, while Bragg would make Louisville his objective point. Cincinnati was placed under martial law, thousands of her citizens were impressed and made to throw up fortifications on the Kentucky side. Hundreds of farmers from the surrounding country reported with squirrel rifles, and they would have made a foe not to be despised if occasion had required their services.

The Confederates set up a provisional government at Frankfort, and proceeded to run the State to suit themselves.

Nelson, sore over his defeat, and suffering from his wounds, did not improve in temper, but he lost none of his indomitable energy. Upon his arrival in Louisville he at once made preparations to defend it against the expected attack of Bragg. In a measure he infused his courage and energy into those who were trembling; yet so great was consid-

ered the danger that a pontoon bridge was prepared to be thrown across the Ohio in case a retreat became necessary.

During these eventful days Fred found plenty to do. He was here, there, everywhere, carrying out the orders of Nelson. Thousands of new troops were thrown into the city, and there armed and drilled.

Nelson never was patient with the slow movements of the government, and the condition in which these troops reported aroused his fiercest anger. He became involved in several quarrels, and, if possible, became more tyrannical and irritable than ever. The sting of the terrible defeat at Richmond still rankled in his breast, and the cloud which hung over his mind was not dispelled.

"I should never have come to Kentucky," he would say to Fred. "I feel it more and more. Richmond was only a forerunner of something worse."

At last, ragged, footsore, and hungry, Buell's army entered Louisville. The city was safe. Preparations were at once made for an advance.

"Fred," remarked Nelson, two or three days after the arrival of Buell, "I am going to give a banquet. I am thirty-seven years of age on the twenty-seventh."

"Yes, General."

"I can tell you a most singular story," continued Nelson. "Last spring, while before Corinth, in conversation with General James Jackson and

General W. B. Hazen, we were surprised to find that all three were born on the same day of the month, September twenty-seventh. I asked them to celebrate our next birthday by eating dinner with me at the Galt House in Louisville, and they accepted the invitation. By a singular chain of circumstances, which not one of us could have possibly foreseen, we are all three now in the city. I shall give the dinner, but there is something uncanny in the whole thing. We three will never eat another birthday dinner together—mark that.”

“Why, General,” said Fred, gayly, “it’s a good omen. You see, it enables all of you to keep your engagement.”

The general smiled, and replied, “I shall try to think so.”

The invitations were sent, and the banquet given. It was a most notable gathering. Nearly all of the general officers in the army were present, as well as many of the more prominent citizens of Louisville. But General Buell, the commander-in-chief of the army, was absent. He sent an excuse that the press of his duties would not allow him to attend. But the truth was, he had received heavy news that day, that of his being removed from the command of the army, and General George H. Thomas appointed in his place.

The banquet went as merrily as the dance before the battle of Waterloo. Many were the toasts drunk to the distinguished generals whose natal day was being celebrated. Little did the banqueters

think that the angel of death hovered over two of the distinguished men they were honoring.

As the wine was going around, the Hon. J. J. Crittenden, United States Senator from Kentucky, and one of the prominent guests present, arose in his place and said:

"Gentlemen, I have a toast to propose, a little out of the ordinary, perhaps, yet one which I think every one present who loves his country and desires the success of our armies will gladly drink to. It is this—" and he raised his glass on high:

"To General Alexander McDowell McCook, the coming commander of the Army of the Ohio."

Many of the officers sprang to their feet with loud hurrahs, and raised their brimming glasses, but the more conservative among them gazed on each other in dismay. As for General Nelson, he was thunderstruck. This was his banquet. Buell, although not present, was an invited guest, and this was a direct insult to him. Angry protests began to be heard, and the banquet came to an end.

Nelson was greatly depressed by what had taken place. He was one of General Buell's staunchest supporters, and that such a circumstance could have happened at a banquet given by him served to render his temper still more irritable. The next day many things occurred to further annoy him. On the morning of the 29th, as he came down from his room, he met in the corridor of the hotel Brigadier-General Jefferson C. Davis.

General Davis had served with Major Robert

Anderson at Fort Sumter, and later with much distinction in Missouri and Arkansas under Fremont and Curtis, especially at Pea Ridge. He had suddenly been assigned by the war department to the command of one of the brigades of new troops then being formed at Louisville to reinforce Buell's army. This brigade was embraced in General Nelson's command.

Meeting General Nelson casually in the corridor of the Galt House, General Davis saluted him, and said: "General, I have just ridden out to where my new brigade is encamped, and I find the men are not yet armed; to whom shall I apply for the arms when I want them?"

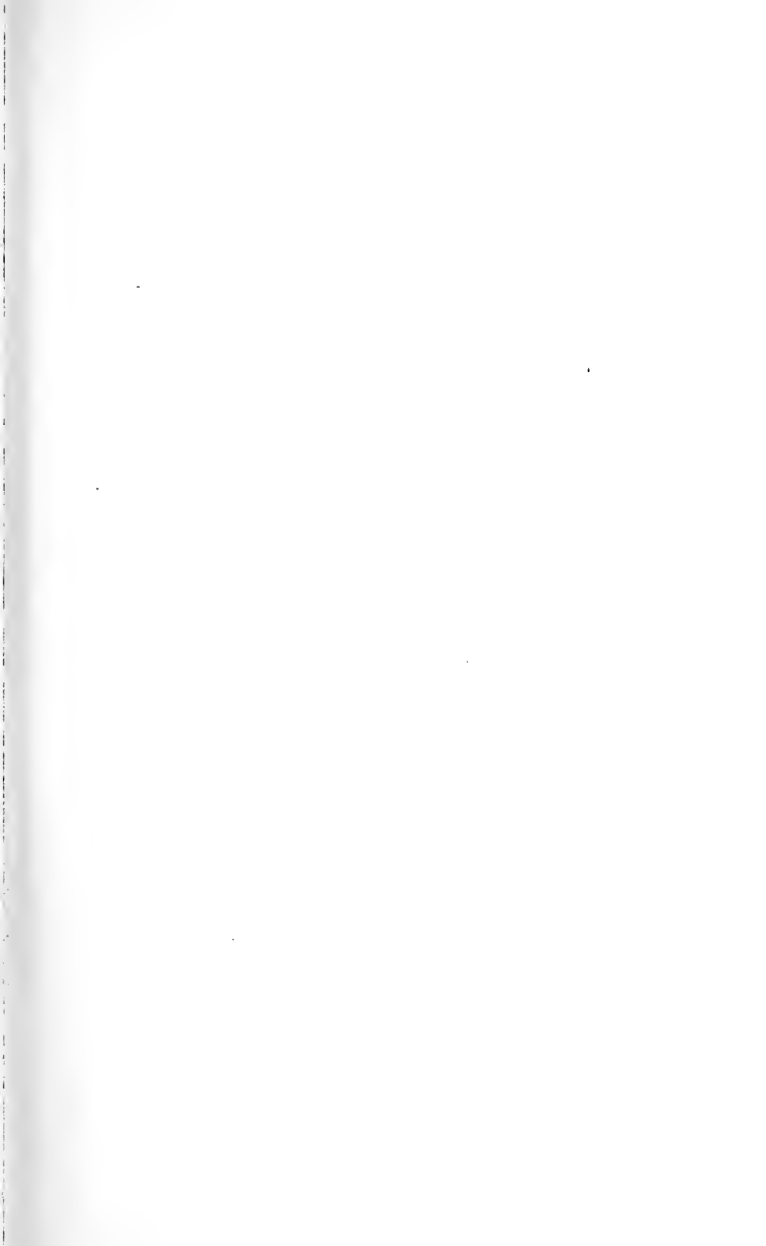
"How many muskets will you need for them?" inquired Nelson.

Davis reflected a moment, and then said, "About four thousand eight hundred."

Nelson, who for some unknown reason had formed a prejudice against Davis, turned upon him with a sneer, and said in the most insulting tone, "Do you pretend to be an officer of the regular army, and say you want *about* so many guns?"

Davis flushed and replied, tartly, "General, I am not making a requisition; when I am ready to make my requisition there will be no indefiniteness about it."

"Do you dare to talk back to me in that way, you puppy?" exclaimed Nelson, and stepping forward he slapped Davis in the face with the back of his hand.





Davis, calling to Nelson to defend himself, almost immediately fired.

To understand the situation and to appreciate the insult, it should be explained that General Nelson was a large, tall, and powerfully built man, while Davis was of scarcely medium height and very slightly built, and that quite a crowd of hotel loungers had now gathered around them.

General Davis naturally turned white with rage, but controlling himself with a strong effort, he replied:

“General Nelson, I suppose you understand that no rank and no position will prevent your being called to account at the proper time for such an insult?”

“What! you puppy! you call me to account? There is satisfaction for you,” again advancing and striking Davis in the face.

The smaller man was now simply insane with passion, and he naturally searched with his hand for the arms he usually carried; but he was at the time totally unarmed.

A young lawyer of Louisville, a friend of General Davis, was standing by in the crowd, and unfortunately threw back his coat and showed Davis the handle of a revolver. Davis, not knowing what he was doing, snatched the revolver, and calling to Nelson to defend himself, almost immediately fired. The shot took effect, and the wound was mortal.

General Nelson was immediately carried upstairs to his own apartments, and every care possible was given him. Being a man of singularly religious

feeling and impulse, in spite of his passionate and aggressive nature, at his own request a clergyman was sent for, and in an hour or two the man who held Kentucky in the Union—the man who, in spite of “don’t hurry” from Grant himself, rushed his troops through to Shiloh, and not only saved that battle, but also Grant and Sherman to the nation—died—died not as he would have died, on the field of battle, but as the fool dies.

A great, and in some respects a noble, man thus fell a victim to his own passionate and unreasonable temper, and General Jeff C. Davis throughout a long and brilliant career in the army always moved under a shadow. He seemed like a man who, while he could not condemn his passionate and impulsive action, always sincerely regretted that his act had been so needlessly provoked.

In General Nelson perished one of the most picturesque figures of the war, a character full of contradictions, yet beneath the rough exterior one of God’s noblemen.

The true character of Nelson can never be written in fewer words, a better idea of the man cannot be gained, than by quoting what the Hon. Stanley Matthews once told him, speaking to him as one true friend speaks to another. Matthews, who afterwards was one of the justices of the Supreme Court of the United States, in 1861 was a colonel commanding a regiment in Nelson’s division. One day Nelson came to him in a towering rage. He had had a quarrel, a serious quarrel, with one of

his best friends, and he came to ask Matthews if it would do for him, an officer in the United States army, to challenge his friend to a duel.

Matthews listened to his story, and then said, "General, do you wish me to tell you freely and truly what I think of this most unfortunate affair?"

"Yes," replied Nelson; "tell me freely and truly."

"And you will take it kindly?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Then allow me to say you have done your friend a great injustice."

Nelson stared at him in surprise, and then stammered, "Do you really think so?"

"I certainly do."

"What should I do? What is right to do?" earnestly asked Nelson.

"What should a gentleman do in such a case?" answered Matthews.

Without saying another word, Nelson went straight to the friend with whom he had quarreled, said he had been in the wrong, and asked his pardon. He then came back and told Matthews what he had done.

Colonel Matthews then said to him: "General, do not let us part without giving me an opportunity of saying one final word. You are two different men, according as you are looked at from the outside, or as you are known from the inside. The outside man is rough, overbearing, inconsiderate, and tyrannical, easily giving offense

and not overlooking offense given by others; but the inside man is generous, open, frank, fearless, magnanimous. You forget that the inside man is known only to a few intimate friends, and that the world at large sees only the outside man. Some of these days you will come in contact with some person in some offensive way, who, not appreciating more than he can see from the outside, will, in resenting your offensive manner, shoot the outside man, and in doing so kill the inside man."

Had Matthews the gift of prophecy when he uttered these words? It would almost seem so by the light of after events.

With a grand military pageant Nelson was laid to rest. His war-horse, fully equipped, was led behind his bier, walking with bowed head, as if he understood that his master would never ride him in battle again. The last sad requiems were sung, the last volley fired over the pulseless breast, the earth heaped on the once proud form, and all that was mortal of Nelson was left alone. No, not alone. On the fresh earth which covered him there knelt the figure of a young officer. His tears fell thick and fast; he prayed for the soul of him that was gone. Lifting his streaming eyes to heaven, he sobbed:

"Merciful Father, show forgiveness to him who lies here. Thou knowest how kind, how good, how generous his real heart was. In his last moments he looked to Thee for pardon for his sins. Forgive, O Father, for he forgave."

The shades of night fell, darkness covered the earth, and still the young officer knelt on that grave as if loath to depart. At last he arose, gazed down on the fresh-made mound, now dimly seen in the darkness, and raising his hands, as if in benediction, said:

“Farewell! farewell, forever! Friend, benefactor, patriot, the savior of Kentucky, the hero of Shiloh! The country may never realize thy worth, or the great loss it has suffered in thy death. Thy true history may never be written. But, O Lord, Thou knowest.”

And with bowed head Fred Shackelford passed out of the silent city of the dead into the great, busy, bustling, throbbing city of the living—a city whose streets echoed to the tramp of thousands of armed men, for Buell’s army was about to march out to attack Bragg.

CHAPTER IX.

A MYSTERIOUS BATTLE.

THE morning following Nelson's burial Fred sat in the now deserted headquarters, utterly disconsolate. It seemed to him that all his hopes, even his patriotism, were buried in the coffin with his fallen chieftain. His sad reverie was broken by the entrance of an orderly, who handed him an official envelope. He broke it open and read:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE OHIO.

LOUISVILLE, KY., Oct. 2, 1862.

Captain Frederick C. Shackelford, late of General William Nelson's Staff, will, at once, report to General George H. Thomas for duty.

DON CARLOS BUELL,
Major-General Commanding.

Fred was surprised at receiving this order, but he welcomed it gladly. He had served under Thomas almost as much as under Nelson, and in his heart, although the thought gave him pain and made him think that he was ungrateful to the dead, he felt that Thomas was superior to Nelson in those qualities which go to make a true man. He did not lack energy and firmness when occasion demanded; yet withal he was as modest and as gentle as a woman. Therefore it was with a lighter heart than Fred

imagined he could carry that he made his preparations to join General Thomas, whose army was even now on its way to Bardstown to give battle to Bragg.

It was a warm welcome that Fred received from General Thomas.

"Fred, or Captain, as I must call you now," said the general, with a smile, "I am glad to see you. I have chosen you to command my scouts, of which I have quite a number. I need not tell you it is a very important position. Upon the accuracy of the information which you furnish may depend the success or safety of the army."

"I am grateful, General," replied Fred, "for the confidence you repose in me, and trust I shall prove worthy of it. To serve under you is like coming home, especially since *he* is gone," and in spite of himself Fred's eyes filled with tears.

"My boy," said Thomas, gently, "those of us who knew Nelson best are shocked at his untimely death. It was a dreadful tragedy, and the country has suffered a greater loss than it will ever know. It was written long ago, 'He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.' If Nelson had learned this lesson, he might have been with us to-day. But let us forget his faults, and remember him only as the patriot, and the bravest of the brave."

"Amen," replied Fred, fervently.

After a little more conversation Fred said: "General, who is in command of the army? I under-

stood Buell had been relieved, but the order I received to-day to join you was signed by him."

Thomas looked pained. "Captain," he answered, "General Buell was relieved, and I was appointed in his place."

"You, General, you!" cried Fred. "Oh! how—" but a look in the general's face made Fred stop abruptly.

"Yes," said Thomas; "I was appointed in his place, but protested so earnestly that Halleck revoked the order. I believed that Buell was wrongfully removed, that the clamor against him was unjustifiable, and believing this I could not do less than I did. Then we are upon the eve of a battle; Buell has his plans all made, and it would be suicidal to remove him just now."

"But, General," asked Fred, "has not Buell lost the confidence, in a great measure, of both officers and men?"

"Unfortunately, yes, and to an alarming extent—so much so that there is a widespread movement to place McCook in command."

"I know," exclaimed Fred. "That dreadful toast offered at the banquet given by Nelson; I believe it was one of the things that put him in the fearful passion that led up to his death."

"It will be fortunate," answered Thomas, "if the evil stops there. It has had a demoralizing effect on the army, and it may lead McCook to act more independently than he should for the success of the army."

“All of these things must be known and keenly felt by Buell,” said Fred.

“They are,” replied Thomas; “and if it had not been for me he would not have consented to assume command again. I told him this campaign would give him an opportunity to regain what he had evidently lost—the confidence of his army as well as of the country. The next few days will make Buell, or he will have to retire from the army. But enough of this. Now let us talk business. I have a number of scouts—splendid, daring men, but men who do not always use the best judgment; neither can I always rely on their information. They need a head, one that will guide them and aid them in their work. I have at this moment an important question to solve; it is whether Bragg will give battle at Bardstown or not.”

“And you want me to find out if possible?”

“By all means.”

“General, let me have six of these scouts of whom you spoke. Let them be mounted on the fastest horses you have. I will try to gain for you the information you desire.”

“How soon do you wish to start, Captain?” asked Thomas.

Fred looked at his watch. “It is now four o’clock,” he answered. “I want to start at five. Let the men have their supper and the horses be well fed.”

At the appointed time the men were ready. They were all superbly mounted, and each was

armed with a brace of heavy revolvers and a Spencer carbine. Five of them were young men, stalwart fellows, and ready for any daring adventure.

The sixth needs more than a passing notice. He was a man over fifty years of age, tall, bony, and every sinew as tough as steel. He was dressed in citizen's clothes, which hung loosely around him, as if made for a much larger man. His eyes were small, dark, and piercing, and were overhung by heavy brows, while his hair and beard, which he wore long, were grizzled. He was not only one of the best scouts in the army, but also one of its most daring spies.

He was known as John Smith, and when rallied on the very uncommon name that he bore, with twinkling eyes he would say:

"Jest the name for a scout and spy, sah. What if they catch me; they only have John Smith, and how in the name of the great Andrew Jackson air they to know what John Smith it is? What if I am strung up: the ole woman and young uns need never let on. It war only John Smith that war hanged, and that don't mean me more than a thousand other John Smiths. Nuthing like the name of John Smith, sah, to hide one's identity."

This was the man who was to be the guide of the party. As Fred rode up to take command, Smith ran his keen eye over him, and gave a grunt; but whether of satisfaction or disgust over so young a leader, no one knew.

"Boys," said Fred, in a quiet tone, "our mission

is to try to find out whether the enemy intends to fight at Bardstown, or run. To do this we shall have to get very close to their main lines. The whole country to the east swarms with their cavalry, and it is doubtful if we could get close enough to find out what they are doing. My plan, therefore, is to ride west and south, and approach Bardstown from the southwest. Smith, I am told you know the roads."

"Yes, Captain, like the cow-paths at home."

"Come on, then. We have no time to lose. You will ride by my side."

"I reckon the young un will do," muttered Smith to himself, as he took his place by Fred's side.

For ten miles Smith rode west, then turned south. Darkness came, but they kept on, covering mile after mile. Little was said, Fred asking Smith a question once in a while about the country.

At last Smith drew rein. "Captain," he said, "we air now southwest of Bardstown, and it is about ten miles away; this road leads directly thar."

Fred struck a match, carefully concealing the light, and looked at his watch. It was ten o'clock.

They had been five hours on the way, and had ridden at a rapid pace.

"It is early yet," remarked Fred, "and we will give the horses a chance to breathe."

When it was time to start Fred said: "We will now ride directly toward Bardstown. Smith, you take the lead, and keep your eyes and ears

open. Ride in single file and at a walk. We have plenty of time, and by walking our horses we shall make little noise, and can better hear any one approaching. I will bring up the rear."

If Fred could have seen the expression on Smith's face when he said this he would have been amused.

"The young un is afraid," muttered Smith, with a look of unutterable disgust. "I didn't think it of him."

After going about two miles, Prince suddenly stopped, pricked up his ears, then turned his head and looked at his master.

"Halt," commanded Fred, in a low voice; "pass the word along the line."

The word was passed, and the men all halted. Fred listened intently, and soon the trampling of horses' feet could be heard in the rear.

"A company of cavalry is coming," said Fred. "We must hide and let them pass. Quick now, boys, and make as little noise as possible."

A fence was let down, and the party passed into a field, where fortunately they found some bushes which screened them.

A squadron of at least fifty cavalry passed, and one was heard to say, "There is no Yanks out this way, sure."

"Captain," asked Smith, "how did you hear them so quick? You must have sharp ears."

"My horse told me," answered Fred. "That is the reason I took the rear; I reasoned that if any scouting parties were out, they would be returning."

"Andrew Jackson!" thought Smith, "and I reckoned he was afraid. Smith you air a fool," and in his excitement he took a second chew of tobacco, although it was not two minutes since he had taken a liberal supply from a huge twist which he kept stowed away in a cavernous pocket.

"It is really fortunate," continued Fred, "they passed. We can now follow them closely without fear of running into their pickets. The pickets will halt them, and thus give us warning. Smith, you ride on ahead, keeping as close to them as prudent, and when they are halted come back and tell us. But first, let me fix your horse's feet;" and Fred, dismounting, drew from his pocket four muffers made to fit a horse's hoofs.

They were soon adjusted, and Smith rode away, his horse stepping as noiselessly as a cat. "Andrew Jackson!" he chuckled, "what a man the captain is—for a boy."

The party now rode more rapidly, but letting Smith keep a good distance ahead of them. They kept on thus for several miles. At last Smith came riding back. "They have been halted," he said.

"How far are we from Bardstown?" asked Fred.

"About two miles," was the answer.

"That is full as near as I hoped to get without running into their pickets," said Fred. "Smith, do you know of any high point near here from which Bardstown and the country beyond can be seen?"

"Yes, Captain; thar is a road which leads to the left, about three hundred yards back, and Carver's

hill is a short distance up that road. From its top thar is a good view."

"Well, you can lead us to Carver's hill." And the march was noiselessly resumed.

"Here we air, Captain," said Smith, as a dark-looking mass could faintly be seen before them.

"We will not try to ascend the hill now," said Fred; "there may be pickets on top. We must wait for daylight."

Taking shelter in a thick piece of woods, the party patiently waited for day. As soon as it was light enough to see, Fred told the rest of his men to remain where they were, while he and Smith carefully reconnoitered the hill; and they moved away as stealthily as two Indians.

"Some one is thar," whispered Smith. "I smell fire; thar, don't you see the smoke?"

Sure enough a little column of smoke was curling upward. Carefully crawling nearer, they soon discovered two soldiers.

"They are cavalry videttes," whispered Fred. "See, their horses are picketed close by."

"They air gettin' breakfast, Captain, and seem to be kind o' careless. We can bag them easy."

"They must be taken without a shot," whispered Fred back; "it will not do to raise an alarm."

"All right, Captain."

The two videttes did not dream of danger; they were earnestly engaged in discussing their breakfast.

"I call this poor grub," said one, "and poorer

drink—nuthin' but water. Say, Tom, wouldn't you-uns like to have a swig of the coffee the blamed Yanks have?"

"Wouldn't I?" exclaimed Tom, smacking his lips. "It's a shame the Yanks have such good things, and we-uns go without."

"Gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to invite you to take a cup of coffee with me," said a stern voice close by them.

The surprised Confederates sprang to their feet. There stood two men covering them with their revolvers.

"It's no use to kick; up with your hands!" said Fred.

The men slowly obeyed, as if in a trance. They could hardly realize that they were prisoners. After disarming them, Fred asked, "What are you doing here?"

"Watching to see if we could see any Yanks," answered one.

"Well, you have seen some, haven't you?" laughingly demanded Fred.

"Two too many," answered one of the prisoners, with some show of humor.

"Do you know what Bragg is doing in Bardstown?"

"No; the ginerel don't consult we-uns," the fellow answered, with a grin.

"That's strange. When did you come out here on guard?"

"Yesterday mornin'."

"When do you expect to be relieved?"

"We-uns had orders to go in to-night without bein' relieved."

"You did? That shows Bragg is leaving Bardstown, doesn't it?"

"Don't know, and if I did, I wouldn't tell you-uns," sullenly answered the prisoner.

"All right, my man," responded Fred, "I don't blame you. Here, Smith, you take the prisoners back. Make them lead their horses; I want to take a good look before I come."

The sun had arisen, and the whole country lay spread out before Fred like a vast panorama. He had a powerful field-glass, and with it he carefully scanned the vicinity of Bardstown. Soon vast clouds of dust began to arise and move to the eastward. Bragg's army was on the march. Here and there he caught a glimpse of the moving columns. Fred watched until he became satisfied that the whole Confederate army was on the march.

"There will be no battle at Bardstown," he said to himself, as he shut up his glass. "Now to Thomas with the news as quickly as possible."

Returning to his men, Fred told them he had learned all he wished. "And now, boys," said he, "a quick return. Smith, can you take us back a shorter way than we came?"

"Yes, Captain, I reckon I can save you about ten miles."

"Lead on, then."

The horses were not spared in going back, and it

was not yet noon when Fred reported to Thomas. The army was on the march, slowly pressing its way toward Bardstown, and there was stiff skirmishing in front.

"Ah, Captain, that is you, is it?" said the general. "You have made a quick trip, and I see you have not returned empty-handed," glancing at the two prisoners. "Do they know anything?"

"I think not," replied Fred; "but if they do they won't tell. But I have found what you wanted to know."

"They are going to make a stand, of course?" responded Thomas. "The stubborn resistance they are making in front shows that."

"You are mistaken, General; the resistance is simply to gain time. There is only cavalry in your front. Bragg's army has already left Bardstown. Press them hard, and you will soon have the place."

This was done, and before night the Union army was in possession of Bardstown. Fred's report made it possible for Buell's army to occupy Bardstown one day sooner than Bragg expected. He was now followed so closely that to save his immense trains he resolved to give battle. For this purpose he concentrated his army at Perryville.

Buell's center corps arrived within two miles and a half of Perryville on the seventh of October. It was halted, and orders sent to McCook, who commanded the left, to hurry up. The same order was sent to Thomas, who commanded the right wing of the army. It was Buell's intention to have

his whole army in line and ready to deliver battle by ten o'clock on the 8th. But Thomas had to march out of the way to procure water for his troops, and it was twelve o'clock before he reported ready for action. McCook was also delayed, but reported his corps in readiness by noon. It was now getting so late that Buell decided not to give battle until the next day. He had been injured by a fall from his horse, and did not leave his tent to learn the position of his army. Neither did he seem to think that Bragg would attack him.

When McCook reported at noon he stated that his men were suffering terribly for lack of water, and that he could get a supply by advancing his lines some six hundred yards. Buell told him to advance and secure the water, if he could do so without bringing on a general engagement.

About one o'clock a heavy cannonading was heard on the left.

"What is that?" asked General Buell, as the roar of artillery reached his ears.

"It's only General Gay with his cavalry," answered one of his aides. "He is shelling the outposts of the enemy."

"Well," answered Buell, as he went back into his tent, "he is wasting a great deal of good ammunition."

The sound of cannonading not only continued, but increased in volume, but as no report of a battle reached Buell, he paid no attention to the matter.

Away over on the right, three miles farther away than Buell, Thomas heard the distant thundering of the cannon. He listened, and was troubled. Turning to General Crittenden, who commanded the right corps, he said:

"Send an aide to General Gilbert and learn the cause of that cannonading. It sounds to me like a general engagement."

In about an hour the officer returned and reported that General Gilbert had stated it was only Gay with the cavalry, and that there was no cause for alarm. Meantime the sound of the cannonading had grown heavier than ever. Thomas shook his head. "If that is a cavalry reconnoissance," he exclaimed, "it is the liveliest one I ever heard."

Three o'clock came, and still there was no cessation of that ominous roar on the left; in fact, it had increased in intensity.

"Crittenden," exclaimed Thomas, "I tell you there is something unusual going on over there. Send another aide. Here, let Captain Shackelford go; I can depend on him. Ride fast, Captain."

Away went Fred on his errand. He found General Gilbert far to the rear of his corps, near Buell's headquarters.

"Why," said Gilbert, "I sent word some time ago to Crittenden that it was Gay with the cavalry. What ails you fellows over on the right, anyway?"

"Nothing ails us," replied Fred, "but both Generals Thomas and Crittenden are naturally alarmed over this continuous and heavy cannonading."

There! just hear that, General. If that doesn't sound like a battle I never heard one."

"Perhaps you never did," replied Gilbert, rather superciliously.

"Perhaps not," said Fred, coolly, "but I was at Mill Springs, Donelson, and Shiloh; but I am glad, General, to hear there is no general engagement, and will so report."

"Hold on," exclaimed Gilbert, "I will send Crittenden a note," and he hastily scribbled a note and handed it to Fred.

"It is strange," said Fred to himself. "I will go by Buell's headquarters, and see if I can learn anything. I don't like that General Gilbert. What is he doing away back here, anyway?"

At Buell's headquarters Fred found everything quiet—no excitement, no uneasiness. Nothing was known of a general engagement. "It's only Gay," was the answer.

There was nothing for Fred to do except to return and make his report; but as he rode, that continuous thunder on the left followed him. He stopped and listened. The wind was blowing a gale from the south, and it roared through the forest, so that musketry could not have been heard half a mile away. "Is it possible that a battle could be fought and no one know it?" he muttered, and he rode on, his heart full of doubt; he was not satisfied.

He found Thomas and Crittenden together discussing the situation and anxiously awaiting his

return. He made his report, and handed Crittenden Gilbert's note. Crittenden opened it, smiled as he read, and handed it to Thomas. This is what was in the note:

"McCook is kicking up all the rumpus. My children are all quiet, and by sunset we will have them in bed and nicely tucked in, as we used to do in Corinth."

Thomas read the note, a look of disgust came over his face, and he turned away without saying a word. At the very moment General Gilbert wrote this note one of his divisions was hotly engaged, and his corps lost nearly a thousand men during the day.

"General," said Fred to Thomas, as they rode away, "I believe there is something wrong over there in spite of all they may say. The sound of cannonading is much plainer at Buell's headquarters than here. If I am any judge, there are at least ten or twelve batteries engaged."

"Captain," replied the general, "surely your suspicions are wrong. Buell and Gilbert would know it if there was a battle in progress."

Fred shrugged his shoulders. "Listen, General," said he.

They both listened intently. "Strange," remarked Thomas, "that a cavalry reconnoissance should cause such a continuous and heavy artillery fire. It may be the enemy is making lots of noise over there, thinking to weaken our right, and then throw his whole force on us. I will be prepared."

So General Thomas rode out to his front line, saw that it was in the most advantageous position, and that every precaution was taken to guard against surprise. It was after dark, and all sounds of battle had ceased on the left before he returned to his headquarters. He was there met by a courier with news that startled him.

Fred had left Buell's headquarters but a few minutes when one of McCook's staff came dashing up. "General," he cried, his voice quivering with excitement, "the whole Rebel army has thrown itself on McCook. Generals Jackson and Terrill are killed, the whole division is scattered to the four winds. Rousseau's men are fighting like devils, but are being forced back."

"Impossible!" cried Buell.

"Alas! it is only too true," replied the officer. "Help must come at once or the whole left will be swept away."

"When was the attack made?" demanded Buell, sharply.

"A little after one, General—nearly three hours ago."

"And here it is a quarter past four. Why was I not informed of this before?" asked the general angrily.

"I do not know."

Buell's face darkened, but he did not question the officer further. Turning to an aide, he said: "Go tell General Thomas to advance his lines, and press the enemy hard." He then mounted his horse and

rode rapidly to the front, where he gave orders for McCook to be reinforced. Gooding's brigade from Gilbert's corps was thrown into the breach, the enemy's advance checked, and just before dark the battle ceased.

It was seven o'clock before Thomas received Buell's orders to advance his lines.

"Does General Buell expect me to make a night attack?" asked Thomas in surprise.

"I do not know," replied the aide. "I give you the order just as I received it."

"What time was this order given you?"

"After four—nearly half-past four," was the answer.

"And you have been nearly three hours coming three miles! What does it mean?" asked Thomas, sternly.

"I couldn't find you," replied the officer, uneasily; "so I waited at your headquarters for you."

"Under what circumstances was the order given you?"

"General Buell had just received news that McCook had been attacked and driven back."

"It seems that it took McCook as long to reach Buell, as it did you to reach me. I shall see Buell before I make this night attack; the battle is now over."

In a few minutes General Thomas received orders not to advance, but to report to headquarters. Accompanied by Fred, he at once obeyed. They found every one excited over the reports from the

battle on the left. As they were talking, General Rousseau rode up. A look of incredulity came over General Buell's face as Rousseau told him of the battle. The excitement of the conflict was still on Rousseau, and he exclaimed, hotly:

"General Buell, you do not seem to comprehend the fierceness of the conflict in which we have been engaged. It was awful. Of the seven thousand men I took into battle, between two and three thousand lie dead and wounded on the field. We were left to fight the battle alone," continued Rousseau, "with help in sight."

"Are you not mistaken about your loss?" asked Buell, huskily.

"No, General; a third of my division is gone."

"And not a word did I hear of the battle until you were slaughtered," said Buell, bitterly.*

General R. B. Mitchell, who commanded a division in Gilbert's corps, now rode up to report. He had been unable to find his corps commander.

*It is almost inconceivable that General Gilbert was ignorant, as he professed to be, that a battle was being fought, and there is strong evidence, not given in the generally accepted histories, that General Buell also knew of it. Captain Julius R. Fitch, now an honored citizen of Evanston, Ill., was in command of Signal Station 3, in rear of Sheridan's Division, Dan McCook's Brigade. Captain Fitch affirms that the following message was signaled to him from the left:

McCOOK TO BUELL. 2:10 P. M., Russell House:

The enemy has attacked me in force with infantry and artillery.

McCook.

This message Fitch affirms he had signaled back to Station 1, at Buell's headquarters; then, watching through his glass, he saw it delivered to the signal officer at Station 1, and saw him deliver it to Buell. Captain Fitch's statement is corroborated by other persons equally responsible.

These very suggestive facts are offered for the consideration of the future historian.

"Where is General Gilbert?" he asked, sarcastically.

"I expect him here every moment," Buell replied.

"General Buell," Mitchell exclaimed, "do you know that Carlin's brigade of my division charged clear through Perryville this afternoon, and if I had been properly supported I could have held the place, and cut the Rebel army in two?"

"Impossible!" cried Buell. "Mitchell, if you had taken and held Perryville, it would have put another star on your shoulder."

"Nevertheless," responded Mitchell, "I took it, and could have held it with support. A great opportunity was lost this afternoon."

As General Mitchell was riding away, he met General Gilbert, who said: "General, you may think it strange that I was not with my command to-day, but I was in the rear looking after supports."

"General Gilbert," replied Mitchell, angrily, "I have received nothing but conflicting orders from you ever since we started from Louisville. You order me to do one thing; and in less than half an hour one of your aides comes and contradicts it. Hereafter, remember, I shall obey no order from you, except it be in writing; and the fewer I get the better satisfied I shall be," and the irate general rode away.

Mitchell had hardly left Gilbert when he met Colonel Dan McCook, who commanded the left brigade of Gilbert's corps.

"Hello, McCook!" said he, "did you see the fight this afternoon?"

"See the fight!" responded McCook, with an oath. "Mitchell, I have sworn enough this afternoon to sink the army. To stand still and see our brave boys cut to pieces, and not raise a finger to help them, made every drop of blood in my veins boil."

"Why didn't you help?" asked Mitchell.

"No orders, no one to give any. I begged Sheridan to open with his artillery. We would have had a cross-fire on the batteries which were cutting up Rousseau so, and what do you think he said?"

"Might hurt somebody, I suppose," growled Mitchell.

"He said he had orders from Gilbert not to open the batteries for fear it might draw the Rebel fire on us. Where is Gilbert now?"

"At Buell's headquarters. I have just been reading the riot act to him."

"Good! Some one should suffer for this day's work," said McCook, as he rode on in search of his general.

When it was known on the right that their comrades had been slaughtered through having been left to fight the battle unaided, the rage of the officers and men knew no bounds.

"What was Buell doing that he didn't know of the battle?" asked one.

"Oh! in his tent, three miles in the rear, rubbing

his sprained leg, probably," sarcastically answered an officer, who apparently was no friend of Buell.

"Better ask McCook," spoke up a partisan of Buell's, "what he was doing when he didn't report to Buell as soon as he was attacked. Thought he could whip the whole Rebel army by himself, probably, and then he could get Buell's place that he is hankering after. McCook is the one to blame."

"What I should like to know," said Fred, "is what General Gilbert meant by sending such a report by me. Buell may be excusable for not knowing about the battle, but what can be said of a corps commander who does not know his own corps is engaged?"

"Who is General Gilbert, anyway?" asked a brigade commander.

No one knew; he seemed to be as mysterious as the battle.

Every one expected that the fight would be resumed in the morning. This expectation was general, but when morning came, and the Federal army advanced, the enemy was gone.

Thus passed into history the battle of Perryville. For the numbers engaged, it was one of the bloodiest and most fiercely contested of the war. The Federal army lost nearly five thousand men. Yet the commander-in-chief knew nothing of the battle until it was nearly over; General Thomas, the second in command, knew nothing of it whatsoever, and over thirty thousand soldiers knew nothing of the death grapple in which their comrades were engaged.

It was the battle mysterious.

CHAPTER X.

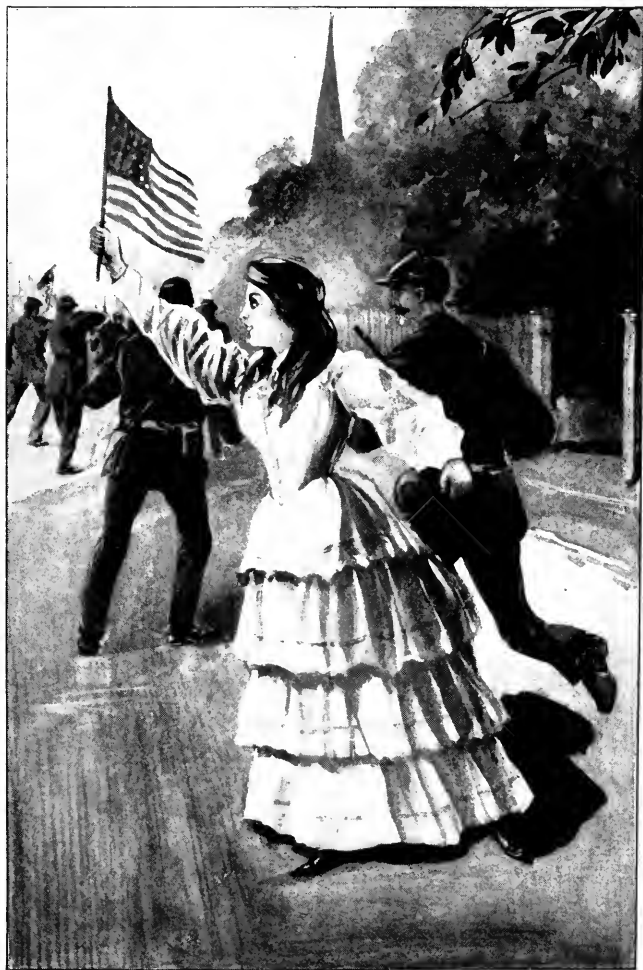
OVER THE CLIFF.

ALTHOUGH Bragg had given up Perryville, it was confidently expected he would give battle at Harrodsburg, he having been reinforced by the army of General Kirby Smith at that place. The terrible blow that he had struck McCook at Perryville so disconcerted Buell that he determined to await the arrival of General Sill's division, which had been sent against Kirby Smith at Frankfort, before he would venture to attack Bragg. Thus were three precious days lost, and this delay enabled Bragg to escape.

On the eleventh, General Thomas, becoming suspicious that Bragg did not intend to fight at either Harrodsburg or Danville, sent a brigade to each of these places to see if they were still held in force by the enemy.

Fred asked and received permission to accompany the force to Danville. He was very anxious to hear from his father, and thought that his uncle, Judge Pennington, might know something of him.

The Confederate cavalry was met just before Danville was reached, and a running fight took place through the streets of the city. The inhabitants of



Miss Freeman rushed out of the House waving the Stars and Stripes.

Danville were nearly equally divided in their sympathies between the Union and the Confederacy. The place had been in possession of the Confederates ever since the battle of Richmond, and the Union citizens welcomed the return of the Federals with the wildest delight. Even when the fight was going on, they brought from their secret places the flags they had hid, and rushing to the doors and windows of their houses waved them and cheered the Federals on.

There lived next door to Judge Pennington a Mr. Freeman, a stanch Union man, whose daughter Jennie, a lovely girl, worshiped the old flag.

Before Mr. Freeman's house was reached, and while the fight was raging, Miss Freeman rushed out of the house waving the stars and stripes. At the same time Fred, to his surprise, saw Calhoun Pennington dash out of his father's yard.

The girl saw him, and waving her flag, shouted, "Run, you braggart, run!"

Calhoun shouted back: "A kiss for that some day, Jennie Freeman," and galloped away amid a shower of balls. He met a squad of Confederate cavalry, and under his command, they turned and pressed back the Federal advance.

Miss Freeman became intensely excited. Heedless of danger, she rushed into the street, amid the hissing balls, and waved her flag for the soldiers to come on.

The commander of the skirmishers, a gallant young lieutenant named Lawrence, saw the girl's

danger. "For God's sake, men, don't shoot! Charge bayonets!" he shouted.

With a cheer the men charged without firing a shot, and as they passed, the lieutenant doffed his hat and said:

"In the name of heaven, lady, go into the house. I would rather every Rebel would escape than have a hair of your head touched."

"Oh, sir, don't mind me!" she cried. "Charge those braggart Rebels."

She would have made a picture for an artist. Poised on one foot, her arm extended with the old flag pointing to the fleeing Rebels, her hair blowing around her shoulders, her bosom heaving with excitement, and her eyes flashing fire, she looked a veritable goddess of victory.

No doubt Lieutenant Lawrence thought so. His eyes devoured her from head to foot. He tried to induce her to go into the house, but he could only stammer. He flushed, turned pale, then, as if recollecting his duty, turned and waving his sword, shouted, "Forward, men!" and they dashed on, scattering the Confederates before them.

But in that brief time Cupid had shot an unerring shaft.

Fred, who knew the girl well, was a spectator of the interesting episode, and when the soldiers had passed on he said to her:

"God bless you, Jennie! you saved the old flag, I see. But it was very rash of you to rush out here into the line of fire. What made you do it?"

"Is that you, Fred Shackelford?" cried the girl, without heeding the question. "Did you see that cousin of yours run? And after all his bragging how he has been living on Yankees the past year! And, Fred, did you notice that lieutenant who was so afraid I would get shot? It was just splendid to see the way he led on his men! He is handsome, isn't he?"

"Poor fellow!" replied Fred, with a solemn face. "He is hit—hit hard; he will never recover."

"Oh! oh! oh!" cried the girl, her eyes filling with tears. "Why didn't you tell me? Why didn't you bring him into the house! Go after him, Fred—bring him here. Don't let him die in the street."

"He is not hit that way, Jennie; but his heart is pierced through and through with a shaft from your bright eyes."

"Fred Shackelford, I have a mind never to speak to you again," she replied, her chin quivering and voice trembling.

"Come to think about it, I don't blame him," continued Fred. "To tell the truth, Jennie, you did look a perfect Joan of Arc. If I didn't know you were so old, and had such an abominable temper, I should propose to you myself, right here."

"I old, and have an abominable temper!" she cried. "I never will speak to you now, Fred Shackelford. So there!" and she turned her back to him.

"See here, Jennie; don't you remember how many times I have taken your part when Calhoun was tormenting you? Now, tell me what has happened while the Rebels have been here. That's a good girl. I was only fooling."

"Oh! Fred, we have had an awful, awful time. Bragg, you know, made his headquarters here, and he flooded the city with proclamations telling how he had come to redeem Kentucky and drive the Yankees into the Ohio, never again to pollute the sacred soil of the State. And the Secessionists believed him. My! but they did carry their heads high. We poor Unionists not only were snubbed, but insulted on every side. Poor papa and all the rest of the prominent Unionists fled from the city. They can come back now, can't they, Fred?"

"I hope so. I met your father in Louisville; he was well. I think you will see him in a few days. But good-bye, Jennie. I must go in and see Uncle and Aunt Pennington."

"Oh, my!" laughed the girl. "I reckon you will find the judge just past seeing. He was so sure Bragg had come to stay."

Fred found his uncle's house tightly closed, and it was some time before he could gain admittance. Judge Pennington had taken a very active part in the organization of the provisional State government, and was one of Bragg's chief advisers. He had been slated as Senator to the Confederate Congress. Now that the city was in the hands of the Federals, Mrs. Pennington saw nothing before him

but death or imprisonment, and was in a state bordering on hysteria.

"You can and will save the judge, won't you, Fred?" she wailed, wringing her hands.

"Aunt, there is no cause for alarm," said Fred, soothingly. "Just let uncle remain quiet, and keep his opinions to himself, and I do not think he will be molested."

"Young man," exclaimed the judge, proudly, "I am too old to stifle my honest convictions; I shall play the hypocrite for no one."

"Not that, uncle; just a little wisdom, that's all. But, uncle, I am so anxious to hear from father. Surely, you have heard from him, or seen him lately."

"Your father has been here several times, Fred. He had a very narrow escape at Richmond; his horse was shot as he was in the act of shooting down that miscreant Nelson, though it seems Nelson was spared for a more ignominious death. But it will always be a matter of regret with your father that he did not die at his hands. Your father believes, and always will, that you would not have been in the Yankee army if it had not been for Nelson."

"Please, uncle," said Fred, and his voice trembled, "do not speak of Nelson. Let the dead rest in peace. Was father at Perryville?"

"No, his command was not there. But, Fred, were you at Richmond? When I asked your father if he saw you there, he looked troubled, and said

that just before he charged on Nelson he thought he saw you, but was not sure. I half-way believe he thinks it was you who saved Nelson's life."

To Fred's great relief his uncle did not wait for an answer, but asked, "Now that Nelson is gone, who are you with?"

"I am on General Thomas's staff," answered Fred.

"A renegade Virginian, as Nelson was a renegade Kentuckian; yet I hear he is a very fair man. But, Fred, I forgot to tell you one thing; your Cousin George Shackelford was killed at Perryville."

"What! Kate's brother!" exclaimed Fred, deeply affected by the news. "I am so sorry. What of Uncle Charles?"

"He is well, but, of course, plunged into the deepest grief. He is now colonel of his regiment."

"I am so sorry to hear of George's death. He refused to take my hand at Donelson."

"Little wonder, Fred. How a Shackelford can fight against the South is more than I can see."

Just then the Federals, who had pursued the Confederates some distance beyond Danville, came back; and Fred, going out, learned that they were not to hold Danville, but were to fall back to their original position. So he went back into the house to bid his uncle and aunt good-bye.

When Mrs. Pennington heard the news she turned to her husband in surprise, and said, "Why, judge, I thought you told me that Bragg was re—"

"Mrs. Pennington!" said the judge, in a tone

which caused that lady to stop talking so quickly that she bit her tongue.

Fred pretended not to notice the interruption, and bidding his uncle and aunt farewell, said he would try and see them again soon.

On the way back to camp Lieutenant Lawrence sought Fred out, and asked, in a tone which he meant to be very indifferent, whether he was acquainted with the young lady who exposed herself so recklessly on the street.

"Acquainted with her!" answered Fred. "I have known her ever since she wore pinafores. A fairer and truer girl does not live in Kentucky."

The lieutenant sighed. "If—if it's possible," he stammered, "would you give me an introduction to her?"

"Certainly, if I get an opportunity," answered Fred. "Ah! Lieutenant, you are hard hit; I told her so."

"You told her so!" cried the lieutenant, flushing angrily.

"Yes, and she thought I meant you had been wounded. You should have seen her. Her pretty eyes filled with tears, and she begged me to go after you and bring you to her home, where she could nurse you."

"Captain," cried the lieutenant, forgetting his anger, "you are joking! You are not telling the truth. Did she ask you to do that?"

"On my honor she did, Lieutenant."

"Oh! why didn't some friendly bullet strike me

down! I could afford to be wounded, even unto death, to have her by me, to feel her gentle touch, to——”

“Hold on, Lieutenant, hold on! Don’t take on like that. You are hit harder than I supposed; but keep up courage. If we stay near Danville, you shall have an introduction. Just let me dance at the wedding!”

Fred had no chance to give the introduction, but the lieutenant got his wish. In one of the skirmishes with Bragg’s rear guard beyond Wild Cat, Lieutenant Lawrence was severely wounded. He was brought back to Danville and placed in a hospital. Here, on one of her rounds of mercy, Miss Jennie Freeman found him, and—but why prolong the story? After the war there was a wedding, and they called the bridegroom Major Lawrence, and the lovely bride was worthy of her gallant husband, and, in the language of the fairy tales, “they lived happily ever after.”

As soon as Fred reached camp he told General Thomas of the conversation between his uncle and aunt, and added that he did not believe that Bragg intended to give battle at all, but would get out of the State as soon as possible.

“It is the general opinion in the army,” replied Thomas, “that he will give battle at Camp Dick Robinson.”

“It was the opinion of every one,” replied Fred, “that he would renew the battle at Perryville. Then we were all sure he would make a stand at Harrods-

burg or Danville. Both of these places have been captured by our troops to-day. It is evident he is retreating."

Thomas thought a moment, and then said: "Captain, you may be right. We will go and see General Buell."

They went and laid the matter before Buell. He listened attentively, and then said:

"Captain Shackelford, that conversation between your uncle and aunt is a very slight thing to base your conclusion on. Everything points to the fact that Bragg intends to make a desperate stand at Dick Robinson. It is a very strong position; he has gathered immense stores there. Everything that Bragg has said points to the fact that he entered Kentucky with the intention of staying. It is not reasonable to suppose he will evacuate the State without a decisive battle. The battle will be fought at Dick Robinson."

The matter was ended so far as Buell was concerned, and Fred retired disappointed and chagrined. He had been turned down without ceremony. On their way back he was silent for some time, and then suddenly said:

"General Thomas, I am going on a scout to-night. I am going to prove the truth of my opinion."

"Until to-night," replied Thomas, "I was fully of the opinion of General Buell that Bragg would give battle. In fact, I confidently expected General Harker to find the enemy in force at Harrods-

burg, and gave him strict orders not to bring on a general engagement. I confess finding both Harrodsburg and Danville held by so small a force has shaken my opinion. I ought to have let you go on that scout you proposed the day after the battle of Perryville, but I thought it too dangerous, and felt sure that the enemy would make a stand at Harrodsburg. I shall not hold you back to-night. How many men will you need?"

"None, General, this is something I can do better alone."

General Thomas looked grave. "I do not wish to lose my captain of scouts," he said.

"General," replied Fred, "I was born and raised in this country. I know every road and path. It is much safer for me to be alone than it is to have a force that would compel me to keep the main roads."

"You may be right," answered Thomas. "When do you expect to be back?"

"By noon to-morrow, if everything goes right," and thus saying, Fred rode away into the night.

When he got outside of the Union pickets he took to the fields, so as to avoid any roving bands of the enemy. Knowing the country so well, he carefully avoided all roads and houses, and a little before midnight found himself in the vicinity of his own home. Hitching Prince in a tumble-down shed which had been used to store hay in, and which was seldom visited, he carefully made his way to the house. It was silent and apparently

deserted. He walked around it, but there were no signs of life.

Going to one of the negro cabins, he knocked lightly at the door. There was no response, and he gave a louder knock.

"Who is dar?" exclaimed a frightened voice inside.

"Massa Fred. Open up, George."

There was a sound of shuffling feet, and the door was unbarred and carefully opened. Fred stepped in and shut the door.

"Good Lor' A'mighty, Massa Fred!" exclaimed George, "what ar' yo' doin' heah? De Rebbels get yo', suah."

"George, when did you see my father last?"

"Ole massa, he heah to-day. Thousands of soger men heah wid him. Went away 'bout dark."

"Are there any soldiers around the place now?"

"No, Massa, da all gone."

"George, wake up Sam; I want to see him." Sam was George's boy, a great, hulking negro of twenty-two.

So Sam was awakened, and after rubbing his eyes a while, was made to understand that Massa Fred wanted him.

"Sam," said Fred, "I want to cross Dick River to-night. I am aware you black boys have a secret path by which you cross back and forth. Now, I want you to guide me over."

"'Fo' de Lawd, Massa, da is no path," answered Sam, trembling. To give up the secret of that

path would be rank treason on the part of any of the slaves.

"Sam, none of your lying, or it will be the worse for you. Do you pretend to say you go around by the road every night you run away to see Jane, that yellow girl of Major Peters's? Guide me over that path and I will give you ten dollars, and keep still. I will also speak to the Major about you and Jane. Ten dollars will go a good way toward furnishing the cabin."

Sam's eyes brightened. "Massa never tell 'bout de path?"

"Never, Sam."

"All right, Massa, I show yo'."

"George," said Fred to the old negro, "I left Prince in that hay shed in the north field. Feed and water him in the morning. Better go before daylight. If I do not come back, tell Stimson."

"Nebber cum back, Massa Fred!" cried the negro. "What yo' mean?"

"The Rebels may get me, George; so if I don't come back, tell Stimson about the horse."

It was past midnight when Fred and Sam started on their perilous journey. It was over four miles to the river, and they had no time to lose. Dick River was a small stream now—owing to the drought entirely dry; but its bed was a terrible chasm, a great gash cut in the earth, in places two hundred feet deep. Its walls of limestone were perpendicular, except that here and there they were seamed by some ravine cutting into them. It

was this great chasm which Fred and Sam had to cross. It would not do to take any road or known path, as these avenues were all guarded by the Confederates; hence Fred appealed to Sam, knowing that the slaves had a secret path across this chasm.

"Sam," asked Fred, as they were on the way, "are there any Rebel soldiers this side of the river?"

"Yes, Massa, guardin' all de roads; but, golly!" and he chuckled, "da kno' nuffin' 'bout de road Sam takes."

As they approached the river Sam descended into one of the side ravines, and they were soon in Egyptian darkness; but the negro seemed to know the way as by instinct. He kept whispering to Fred what was before him, thus making it as easy for him as possible. But in spite of these cautions, he received more than one bump and fall.

At length the bottom was reached, the dry bed of the stream crossed, and the ascent commenced. Fred found it easier climbing in the dark than it had been going down. Before they reached the top Fred whispered, "Sam, there may be pickets on top; be very careful."

"Me be careful, Massa; me dodge dem."

But none were found, and as soon as they assured themselves of the fact Fred said, "Sam, you know that hill a short distance back of Major Peters's house?"

"Yes, Massa, know him mighty well. Bin thar wid dat yeller Jane many a time."

"Well, Sam, take me there."

This was accomplished without incident, but in the direction of Dick Robinson bright fires were seen burning.

"We will stay here until morning, Sam," remarked Fred. "So make yourself as comfortable as possible."

Sam threw himself on the ground and was soon fast asleep, but Fred kept a lonely vigil until day-break.

When the sun was fairly up, Fred awakened Sam and said: "Now, Sam, I am going to the top of the hill. Keep close watch, and if anything suspicious happens, whistle."

This Sam faithfully promised to do, and Fred carefully worked his way to the top of the hill. He took one look and was satisfied. Clouds of smoke rested over Dick Robinson, and away to the south heavy clouds of dust were rising. There were no troops in sight except cavalry, and with the aid of his glass he could see they were engaged in feeding the flames with sundry articles. It was all plain; the Confederates were burning their surplus stores and retreating south.

"I must get back with this news as soon as possible," thought Fred. "I am afraid it is too late now to overtake any large portion of Bragg's army. The question is, can I get back without being observed; the cavalry seems to be pretty numerous around here. I must try, anyway. I wonder what General Buell will say now."

Making his way back to the place where he had left Sam, he found to his surprise that the negro had disappeared. Fred gave a low whistle, but there was no response.

"If that nigger has played the traitor," he muttered—but he was startled by the sound of a rifle shot, and then shouts from the direction of Major Peters's house. Running to where he could get a view, he saw Sam coming full speed toward him, pursued by a Confederate soldier.

As soon as Fred left Sam that worthy began to think of Jane, and the more he thought the greater became his desire to see her. At last the desire overcame his prudence.

"I will jes' go an' steal one kiss from her lubly lips," he thought, "an' den get back 'fore Massa Fred do."

Just before he reached the house, he suddenly came face to face with a Confederate soldier. If he had kept his head, in all probability he would have been taken for one of the slaves of the place, and passed unnoticed, but he turned and ran.

"Here, you black rascal!" yelled the soldier, "what are you running for? Halt!"

But Sam ran the faster, and the soldier fired. This gave the alarm, and in a short time a company of cavalry was in pursuit. Sam headed directly for Fred. Discovery could not be avoided.

"My only chance is to gain the river," thought Fred, and away he went like an antelope.

Sam saw him as he broke cover, and took after him, yelling, "Oh, Massa! Massa!"

This called the attention of the soldiers to Fred, and they redoubled their efforts. They now had bigger game than the negro. Fred's only chance was to gain the woods which bordered the river. To do this he had at least half a mile to run, and, fortunately, three or four high fences intervened. These the cavalry had to throw down before they could follow. Sam ran like a race horse, and overtook Fred before he reached the woods. The pursuers evidently thought they might escape, for they commenced firing, and the bullets began to zip uncomfortably close to their ears. The goal was almost reached when Fred heard the thud of a ball, and, glancing at Sam, saw him sink to the earth. Fred caught a look of his face as he fell—the stamp of death was upon it. Poor Sam! he would never see Jane again; his devotion had cost him his life.

With one last desperate effort Fred reached the woods, and soon arrived at the edge of the cliff. He looked over and groaned. It descended smooth and perpendicular as a wall for fully two hundred feet. The way was yet open to the left, and he turned, hoping to find a ravine or at least a cleft or seam in which he might hide. He dashed along at breakneck speed, when suddenly his foot caught in a vine and he fell, plunging headlong over the cliff. A cry of horror burst from his pursuers, who were close behind him.

As a drowning man clutches at a straw, so did





Fred wildly grasped a small Sapling as he went over the Precipice.

Fred wildly grasp a small sapling as he went over the precipice. It bent down with his weight, remained out of sight for a moment, then slowly sprang back into its place.

His pursuers came and looked over. About ten feet below there was a narrow ledge. A tangled mass of vines grew down to this ledge, and they were torn in one place as if Fred had clutched them when he fell.

A hundred feet below, the tops of the tallest trees were waving, and lodged in the branches of one was Fred's hat.

"Poor devil!" said one of the soldiers, "he deserved a better fate; he was a plucky one."

"Better this than be hanged as a spy," remarked another.

Just then an officer came galloping up—no less a personage than Major Hockoday.

"Where is he?" he cried, "you haven't let him escape, have you? It was Fred Shackelford, the best scout in the Yankee army. His capture would be worth a regiment of men."

"He fell over the cliff, Major," said one of the men.

The major started. "Are you sure?" he asked.

"Sure, we saw him fall."

"I have no cause to love the boy," thought the major; "in fact, I have many causes to hate him; the damage he has done to the South is past estimating, and yet I am sorry; it will be heavy news to bear to his father."

Major Hockoday dismounted and peered over the edge of the cliff. There, a hundred feet below, was Fred's hat, and as the wind stirred the tops of the trees, the hat waved to and fro, and nodded and beckoned as if in mockery.

Out of the solemn depths there came the caw! caw! of crows, and now and then they arose on their sable pinions, almost brushing the hat in their flight.

Major Hockoday stepped back, and lifted his eyes to heaven. The glorious sun was lighting the earth, but, high in the clear air, a buzzard slowly circled around and around, as if he had already scented the feast awaiting him.

The major shuddered, mounted his horse, and rode away, saying: "See that a strong picket line is maintained along the river during the day; stoutly resist any advance the enemy may make, and at nine this evening withdraw to Dick Robinson and there await orders."

CHAPTER XI.

FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH.

WHAT had become of Fred? So sudden was his fall that he had no time to think. The clutching of the sapling was by chance. It changed the direction of his fall, and instead of going down head foremost, he alighted on the narrow ledge spoken of, and at the same time he grasped the vines which grew thickly on the side of the cliff.

The ledge supported his weight, and by holding on to the sapling and the vines he managed to keep himself from falling. But he heard the voices of his pursuers close at hand. He had saved himself from a dreadful death only to be captured. Then, with a great leap of the heart, he noticed that the cliff was shelving, and that in behind the vines there was plenty of room, not only to rest securely, but also to be safe from observation. To part the vines and crawl behind them was the work of a moment. To do this he had to release the sapling, his only means of again reaching the top. But he did not think of this; his only thought was for present safety. He heard all that passed between Major Hockoday and the soldiers, and smiled to think how completely they were deceived. The

order to picket the cliff until night he heard with dismay. It meant that he must lie in concealment all day, and he resigned himself to his fate, making himself as comfortable as possible.

But as he lay thinking, by degrees his situation forced itself upon him. How was he to scale the cliff? Could he not climb up by the vines? He reached out and took hold of some of them and pulled; they broke off in his hands. He looked at the cliff. It was so shelving there was no possible chance of getting any foothold to support his weight. Perhaps there was a place where the vines were stronger and thicker; he would risk it rather than give himself up, perhaps to be hanged as a spy.

He could hear the soldiers talking above him, and laughing over his supposed fate; and one came to the edge of the cliff and dropped a stone, to find out, he said, how long the Yank was in falling.

The soldiers soon settled down to a game of cards, and the sound of their voices came faintly to his ears. Tired nature asserted itself, and he fell into a fitful slumber. In his dreams he was once more fleeing from his pursuers; once more Sam was shot down by his side; once more he took the fearful plunge over the cliff, but the bush and vine gave way, and he went down, down! and the rushing wind took away his breath, and he saw with frightful distinctness the cruel, jagged rocks below. With a cry of agony that echoed and reëchoed through the rocky gorge, he awoke, trembling in every limb, the cold sweat streaming from every pore.

The fearful shriek startled the crows from their resting-places, and they flew away with hoarse cries. The cards dropped from the trembling hands of the players above. The cry was so terrible, so unearthly, surely it could not be human. With chattering teeth and shaking limbs, they crouched on the ground, some mumbling prayers, and others uttering imprecations. At last one of them whispered through his white lips: "It's the wraith of the boy! It's the wraith of the boy!" And they moved farther away from the cliff, and all the gold in the world would not have induced one of them to go again and look over where Fred had fallen. At the first shades of night they hurried away, and their story was listened to with open-mouthed wonder by their comrades.

When darkness came, and Fred knew by the silence above that the guards had gone, he made an attempt to scale the cliff. Carefully he turned, resting his knees on the ledge, and clutching the vines. Inch by inch, he drew himself upright. Hope revived in his heart; the vines would hold. He attempted to draw himself up, but the moment his full weight came upon them they gave way, and he fell, his knees striking the ledge with such force as to bruise them cruelly, and he felt himself slipping over. Was his dream coming true? In desperation he clutched the vines with both hands: they held, and he was saved. Trembling, shaking in every nerve, he crawled back into his resting-place, and for a time lay there as weak as a babe.

Then he gave himself up to despair. He must lie there in the cleft, dying by inches, perishing with hunger and thirst.

"Better," he moaned, "throw myself down at once and end it. Why did I not perish on the battlefield, or why was it Sam and not I who fell? To die here, like a rat in a hole, is awful," and he groaned in his agony.

At length he grew calmer. He would not give up or lose all hope. Perhaps when light came he might find a place where the vines grew larger and stronger, or could he not devise some way to get hold of the sapling? He might make a rope out of his clothing, and by some means throw the end around the sapling or some projecting rock; and with these thoughts he grew calm. After a while he fell asleep—for sleep comes, even to the condemned criminal in his cell.

Now, in his dreams his mother came, and smiled on him, and he stretched forth his hands and murmured, "Mother! mother!" He awoke with the bliss of the dream on him and a great contentment in his heart.

Surely he heard the sound of voices in the gorge. He parted the vines and peered over the ledge, and below was a party of negroes bearing torches, apparently looking for something; and in the light of one of the torches he recognized George. His heart gave a great bound; he was saved!

"George! George!" he shouted. "Here I am!"

The torch dropped from the hands of the

affrighted negro and he fell on his knees, crying: "O Lawd! Lawd! Dis nigger goin' to die. Massa Fred call him from de udder worl'. O Massa Fred! go way! go way! Ole George not ready to die!"

"George!" cried Fred, "I am alive; come and save me."

With cries of terror the whole crowd of negroes dropped their torches, and with howls, shrieks, and prayers, fled through the darkness.

With a sinking heart Fred saw the effect of his cries for help.

"They have taken me for a spirit," he groaned, "and all the power in the world could not induce them to come back. I am lost! I am lost!"

But the shrieks and cries of the negroes attracted the attention of John Stimson, General Shackelford's overseer, and soon the affrighted negroes were crowded around him, and with chattering teeth told how Massa Fred's haunt had called to them; and George fell groveling at his feet, crying: "Ise goin' to die! Massa Fred he called me by name. He say, 'George, George, cum to me!' O Lawd! Lawd!"

It was but little Stimson could get from the terror-stricken crowd, and he knew it was of no use to try to get one of them to return with him, so he said:

"Boys, build a good fire, and make a big light; that will keep away any ghost. I will go and see if I can find out what has frightened you so."

"Massa Stimson, don't go!" pleaded George. "Dat ghost git yo', suah!"

But Stimson laughed, and told them ghosts wouldn't touch white folks, and bade them stay close by the fire until he came back. Then taking a torch he slowly made his way up the gorge.

"Can it be," he said to himself, "that Fred was not killed by the fall, but badly hurt, and is lying helpless? It seems impossible that any one could fall over the cliff and live, but it is a strange story these niggers tell. One thing is certain, dead men don't call out."

Fred saw the glimmering light of Stimson's torch coming, and hope once more revived.

"Some white man must have been with them," he thought. "No negro would have ventured back."

As soon as the light came near enough, Fred cried: "Help! help! I have fallen over the edge of the cliff!"

"Hello!" shouted Stimson. "Who are you? and where are you?"

"Is that you, Stimson?" answered Fred. "Thank the Lord, I am saved—saved!"

"Fred Shackelford, in the name of God, where are you?" exclaimed Stimson, gazing up toward where the voice came from, for he could see nothing, and began to feel that the mysterious voice was a little uncanny.

Fred then told him what had happened, and said, "The only way you can rescue me is to get a stout rope, and pull me up to the top."

Stimson listened, and then said, cheerily:

"Keep up good courage, my boy; I will soon have you safe and sound."

"Hold a moment," cried Fred; "are there any Rebels around?"

"No," answered Stimson, "they are all gone."

"Then hurry, for I am most dead. I have been in this hole for about fifteen hours."

Fred saw the glimmering light disappear in the distance, but this time with the happy thought that deliverance was at hand.

Stimson found it hard work to make the negroes believe that Fred was not dead; and it was only by the most direful threats that he at last persuaded those of the bravest to consent to go with him. As for George, he would have been blown from the mouth of a cannon before he would have budged an inch. He looked upon the whole thing as an artful trick of the ghost to get hold of him. Stimson told the old man and the others whose help he did not need to go home, and right gladly did they obey.

Minutes seemed like hours to Fred, but at last he heard Stimson shouting, "Fred, where are you?"

"Here! here!" answered Fred.

Guided by the sound of Fred's voice, Stimson and his men carefully worked their way to the edge of the cliff; a stout rope was lowered, and Fred was drawn up by strong and willing hands.

The first thing he did when safe was to fall on his knees and thank God for his great deliverance;

then, turning to Stimson, he grasped his hand and poured out his thanks.

The rough old overseer was greatly moved. He brushed the tears from his eyes, and exclaimed:

"Captain, I am as happy as you are. Do you not know I was looking for your dead body?"

"Ah!" said Fred, "that accounts for the fright of George and the rest of the negroes. They thought I was dead. But how in the world, Stimson, did you come to know I had fallen over the cliff?"

"I received a note from Major Hockoday asking me to look for your dead body," answered Stimson.

This explained it. Major Hockoday was not willing to let the body of the son of his friend, General Shackelford, remain unburied—a feast for the buzzards. So he sent a note by one of his men to Stimson, telling him what had befallen Fred, and asking him to find the body and give it Christian burial.

Fred heard the story in silence. It was to Major Hockoday, then, that he owed his preservation.

"I will remember the major for that," said Fred, "even if he thought it was only to bury a dead boy."

There was a grand jubilee among the slaves when they were made to understand that Massa Fred was still alive. But George still doubted. It was only after he had seen Fred walk around, and with faltering step had approached and felt of his arms to

make sure he was flesh and blood, that he believed. Then he covered Fred's hands with his kisses, and wet them with his tears.

"Golly! Massa Fred!" said the faithful old servant, "I reckon yo' war a ghost, suah, an' dat ole George's time had cum. But whar is dat nigger, Sam?"

He was told as gently as possible of the death of Sam. As he listened he scratched his head, shuffled his feet around, and then looking up, said:

"Dat air Sam, he allers war a fool nigger. Now, Ned, he would⁷ hab known 'nough not to run. Dat yellor gal, Jane, jes' made a bigger fool ob him dan ebber."

And with these words poor Sam was dismissed.

After a hearty meal, for Fred was nearly famished, he rode to Thomas's headquarters, where he was gladly welcomed.

"I had nearly given you up for lost, Captain," said the general. "What news?"

"Bragg has evacuated Camp Dick Robinson, and his army is well on its way to the South."

In less than a minute an aide was galloping furiously to Buell with the information Fred had brought.

After listening to the story of his adventures, General Thomas said: "Captain, you have much to be thankful for. You have been delivered from the very jaws of death. The news of Bragg's retreat, I am afraid, has come too late; that wily general has outwitted us, and will get away with

his plunder. And his escape will seal the fate of Buell; yet, there is not a single general, from myself down, but expected Bragg to fight a general engagement. You sounded the first warning, Captain, from what you heard your aunt say, but the warning was not heeded."

No sooner did Buell receive the news of Bragg's retreat than he ordered a hot pursuit, but to no purpose; with the exception of a few skirmishes with the rear guard, Bragg escaped unscathed from the State.

The Kentucky campaign gave rise to any amount of controversy, not only in the Federal, but in the Confederate army as well. If Bragg intended, as he proclaimed, to hold Kentucky, his campaign was a failure. But if his campaign was intended to inflict all the damage possible on the Federals with a slight loss to himself, the campaign was a great success. The Federal armies in Tennessee and Kentucky, from the first of August to the last of October, suffered a loss of at least 20,000 in killed, wounded, and prisoners, and all this without a decisive engagement. During the same time the Confederate loss did not exceed 8,000. A vast amount of Federal property was captured, and what could not be carried away was destroyed.

When it became known for a certainty that Bragg was retiring from the State, Buell sent for Fred and told him he wished to send him on a very hazardous mission, that of carrying dispatches to Bowling Green and Nashville.

The posts of Bowling Green, Kentucky, and Nashville, Tennessee, were the only ones not evacuated when Buell made his retrograde movement. For weeks these posts had been cut off from all communication with the North. Buell now wanted to get dispatches to these places, telling the commanders that Bragg was retreating and that they must be prepared for an attack. These dispatches had to be taken through a country swarming with detached bands of the enemy, and Buell had selected Fred as the one best fitted to accomplish the mission successfully. For the dangerous enterprise Fred picked out ten of his best and bravest scouts.

Among these was John Smith. Fred had formed a high opinion of the old scout's ability. Another one of the ten was a young man named Richard Darling. He was twenty-seven years of age, had received a fine education, but drifted West, and had spent three years on the plains, fighting Indians and freighting. Fred considered him one of his best men.

The next morning Fred reported with his men at Buell's headquarters, received the despatches and final instructions, and the little party turned their horses' heads toward Bowling Green.

CHAPTER XII.

MISSING.

THE ten men whom Fred had chosen for his companions were as brave and reckless a set as ever undertook a desperate enterprise. Not a man of them but had taken his life in his hand a score of times. Each one was splendidly mounted and armed with a Spencer repeating carbine and a brace of heavy revolvers. Fred thought they were good for five times their number. The last instructions were received from General Thomas, and the little party rode away as gayly as to a wedding feast.

The general stood and gazed after them until they were out of sight, and then remarked, "See how carelessly they ride away, and yet it is the last scout that some of them may make—but Captain Shackelford will get through if any one can."

After the first few miles small parties of roving Confederates were occasionally seen, but they quickly got out of the way. It was not Fred's wish to fight, except in case of necessity; in fact, he had orders to avoid fighting, if possible. They met with no incident worth mentioning until they approached Green River, on the road which leads from Campbellville to Columbia. Where this road

crosses the river the north bank is low, but the south bank rocky, steep, and high. The road, after crossing the river, turns down the stream for nearly a mile, then doubles back on itself, ascending the bank by an easy grade until it reaches a point opposite the bridge, where it turns south once more, not more than five hundred feet from where the stream is crossed. There is a footpath up the steep, rocky bank, which pedestrians take, and by making the stiff climb, save nearly two miles of travel.

When Fred came in sight of the bridge, a company of Confederate cavalry, going the same way as himself, were just crossing it. They turned down the stream, and the trees which lined the bank soon hid them from view.

"Halt," commanded Fred, "that party has evidently not noticed us, or if they have they have taken us for Confederates, and we will wait and let them get well in advance."

Just then one of his men exclaimed, "Great heavens! There comes another company behind us." Fred looked back, and to his dismay saw at least one hundred Confederate cavalymen coming at a swinging gallop. They had been caught between two hostile forces.

It did not take Fred a moment to determine what to do. He had traveled the road before, and knew of the turn, and of the path up the steep bank.

"Forward, boys," he shouted, and they made a

dash for the bridge. This crossed, he commanded five of his men to take the horses up the bank, and the other five to stay with him, and help to hold the bridge.

"It's a steep climb," he said, "for the horses, but let Prince go first, and the others will follow more willingly. Here, Prince, go," and the horse, obedient as a dog, commenced climbing the hill.

Fred and his five men now had stern work before them. Concealing themselves behind rocks, they awaited the onset. The advancing Confederates noticed that something was wrong with the party in front, and came on a charge. Just as the foremost horses struck the bridge it was swept with a torrent of balls, and several horses and riders went down.

Surprised at the rapidity of the fire, for Fred and his men were discharging their repeating rifles and revolvers, making as much noise as a hundred men with muzzle-loaders, the Confederate commander, fearing an ambushade, sounded the retreat, and formed his men in line of battle some distance from the bridge. This gave Fred and his men time to climb the bank, and join their comrades, who had led all the horses up in safety.

The Confederates in advance, hearing the firing, instead of keeping on, galloped back to see what was the matter, and thus all their enemies were in their rear. With a yell of defiance and a parting volley, Fred and his party mounted and rode away.

Coming to a road leading to the right, they took it, and soon were beyond all fears of pursuit,

"Captain," said Smith, "I kinder don't like to flatter you, but that thar was as slick a job of gettin' out of a tight place as I ever see."

"It was nothing," responded Fred. "I have traveled the road several times before, and knew the lay of the ground like a book."

But the respect and admiration of the men for their young captain did not diminish on account of his explanation.

The party reached Bowling Green without further adventure, and found the garrison in the highest spirits, and beyond being deprived of their mail facilities, perfectly contented. The enemy had not troubled them, and the country had afforded them abundance of food. A flouring-mill had been kept busy grinding flour, and for weeks the garrison had been enjoying the luxury of soft bread. Plenty of army stores were left, and there was scarcity of nothing. In his northern march Buell had left hundreds of crippled and worn-out soldiers there, and these convalescents, as they were called, were now the heartiest and fattest men in his army.

Of all the men in Buell's army none had quite as easy a time during the Bragg-Buell campaign as those at Bowling Green. The storm centers were to the north and south of them; they rested in the calm.

The news that Fred brought was eagerly devoured, and many were the questions asked. Colonel Bruce, the commander of the post, received his dispatches, and after reading them, said; "Buell

thinks that part of Bragg's army may attack me before he can reinforce me. In this I think he is mistaken. Bragg is too far east to try to reach me. If I am attacked it will be by Breckinridge's forces moving down from Nashville. But I think it is Nashville that is in danger; that city has been in a state of siege ever since the army moved north."

"I have dispatches to take through to Nashville also," said Fred.

"What!" asked Colonel Bruce, in surprise, "you ordered to reach Nashville?"

"Yes, Colonel."

"Buell surely does not understand the situation, or he would not have given you such an order. The undertaking is a most dangerous one. Breckinridge and Forrest have the place closely invested. I have tried to get dispatches through several times, and have failed each time. It is a continuous fight there."

"Nevertheless, my orders take me there, and there I shall go, or at least, I shall try," answered Fred.

"I see no alternative," replied the colonel; "but it is a most hazardous undertaking."

By the direct road it is about seventy-five miles from Bowling Green to Nashville. A party as well mounted as Fred's could easily make it in a day. But Fred had no thoughts of taking this road; he knew he would have no earthly chance of getting through. After discussing the situation with Colonel Bruce, he decided that the safest route

would be to bear to the west, keeping about half-way between Franklin and Russellville.

With the best wishes of Colonel Bruce for a safe journey, Fred and his companions started for Nashville.

It was early in the morning of a glorious October day, and the whole party were in the highest spirits.

"We must not ride so fast as to weary our horses," said Fred, "as at any time our safety may depend on their freshness."

The journey was without adventure until late in the afternoon. They had crossed over the line into Tennessee, and were exercising the utmost vigilance to prevent a surprise. As a matter of precaution, Smith, who was dressed in citizen's clothes, was sent ahead as an advance guard. If he scented danger he was to signal back by waving his hand. For some little time Fred had been aware that there was a large party of mounted men some two miles in his rear, and had been riding fast so as to distance them. Suddenly Smith, who was some two hundred yards in front, gave a violent signal for them to halt. There was a sharp curve in the road, so Fred could not see what was ahead.

Smith had ridden almost onto a party of Confederate cavalry lounging by the side of the road, apparently waiting for the larger party behind. For the second time Fred was sandwiched between two hostile bodies of troops. So close was Smith to them there was no chance of running, so making a signal for those in the rear to stand still, he boldly

rode forward. Saluting the leader, a young lieutenant, standing by the side of his horse, he asked, "What command is this?"

"The Nashville Independents—a part of Forrest's command," was the answer. "But who are you?"

"I am John Smith of Kentuck, guide to a small party of Morgan's men who have been scouting north and west of Bowling Green."

"Where is your party?" asked the lieutenant.

"Jest 'round the bend. I wanted to make sure who you war before they advanced. I will tell them to cum on," and turning his horse, he rode leisurely back.

In a few words Smith told Fred the situation. "Thar is not over a dozen of them," he said, "and they are entirely unsuspectin'. We can charge right through."

It was the only way, and Fred gave the order to charge. "Don't take time to shoot," he said. "The safest way is to go by them like a whirlwind, lying low on your horses' necks."

The scouts were into and past the astonished Confederates before they recovered from their surprise. Then came a straggling volley, and Smith's horse staggered and fell. In the hurry of the moment Fred did not notice the misfortune which had befallen the old scout.

The sound of the firing brought up the Confederates in the rear on the gallop, and learning what was the matter, the captain commanding ordered a swift pursuit.

"We shall have to check those fellows at the first favorable place," muttered Fred, as he looked back and saw how closely his party was being pressed.

They were now running up a hill, and the horses were laboring heavily. On each side of the road there were woods so thick with underbrush as to be impassable for cavalry. On reaching the top of the hill, Fred noticed it fell away abruptly, so that a few yards would take them out of sight.

"Just the place!" exclaimed Fred. "Halt! You, Osborne and Jennings, hold the horses. Dismount, quick. Now, boys, creep up to the rise, just so as to be out of sight. Keep cool. Fire low. Now—fire!"

Eight men arose as one man and poured a volley into the ranks of the pursuing cavalry, the foremost of them being but a few yards away. The leading horses went down; before those behind could check their speed they plunged over the fallen horses, and the narrow road became a kicking, struggling mass of men and horses.

The leaden hail kept coming, and there was no escape except retreat, and this those who were unharmed did, after delivering an ineffectual volley.

"Well done, boys!" shouted Fred. "I think their ardor has been considerably cooled."

"Furies!" yelled the Confederate captain, "are you going to let ten men beat you off?"

"Ten men!" replied an old veteran, "from the way they shoot I should reckon there were at least a thousand."

“They are armed with repeating rifles,” said a second. “They can shoot all day without loading.”

A hasty consultation was held. It was decided to dismount a number of men, have them enter the woods on either side, and flank the daring Yankees.

Fred saw the movement, and said, “Now we must get out, boys,” and when the Confederates had pressed their way through the woods, they found the birds flown.

The captain of the Confederates, whose name was Malcolm, stormed and raved like a madman, when he found that they had escaped.

“Night will soon be here,” he growled, “and there is no use of chasing them further. They are a good two or three miles away by this time; then our wounded must be attended to.”

It was with a rueful countenance that Captain Malcolm surveyed the field. Six of his men lay dead, six were desperately wounded, while at least ten more had received wounds more or less severe. Twelve or fifteen horses were killed and disabled.

Fred’s men had not only emptied their seven shooters, but a revolver each, and almost every shot had taken effect on a man or a horse.

“A pretty report,” muttered Captain Malcolm, “to carry back. Ten men inflicted this loss on us, and then got away.”

There was a large plantation some half a mile in the rear, and here the dead and wounded were carried.

As Captain Malcolm was pacing up and down the porch of the house, cursing his luck, one of his men approached and said, "Captain, have you forgotten the prisoner?"

"The prisoner! the prisoner!" exclaimed the captain. "Bring him in."

Smith was brought into the presence of the infuriated officer.

"Who are you?" demanded the captain, with a fierce oath. "You wear no uniform."

The old man looked his interlocutor calmly in the face, and replied, "I am John Smith of Kentucky—guide and scout to the Federal army."

"John Smith of Kentucky?" sneered the captain. "I think I have seen you before. If I mistake not, I saw some one who looks like you sneaking around our works at Fort Donelson, before it was attacked by Grant. I have the pleasure to inform you, John Smith of Kentucky, you will hang to-night at precisely nine o'clock. You wear no uniform, you are not a soldier, therefore not entitled to be held as a prisoner of war. You are simply a renegade and a spy. You will guide no more Yankees into our midst. Away with him, and if he escapes the one who guards him will take his place."

"Captain," said a lieutenant, the second in command, and a fine-looking young officer, "is not that order rather summary? If the man is really a spy, should he not be tried and condemned as such by a court-martial?"

"No one asked you for your opinions, Lieutenant Garrard," snapped the captain. "The man dies. He led us into the ambushade. This version of our defeat is the only way we can square ourselves with Forrest."

The lieutenant bowed. "One thing more, Captain," he said. "You have only ordered the roads picketed. Ought we not to throw a strong guard around the whole camp? Those Yankees seem to be desperate fighters, and they may attack the camp and attempt a rescue of the prisoner."

The captain's lip curled. "Ten men carry off a prisoner from over one hundred! You are getting timid, Lieutenant."

Lieutenant Garrard flushed, and turning on his heel, went away without another word.

The shades of night fell. The wounded had been cared for, the dead buried. The Confederates were encamped in a grove close to the plantation house. The little band of Federals that had inflicted such a loss on them they supposed miles away. It lacked but five minutes of nine o'clock.

"Bring out the prisoner," commanded Captain Malcolm. Smith, with his hands bound, was brought before him.

"Traitor!" sneered Malcolm. "Six brave men who rode with us this morning now lie in their shallow graves, uncoffined and unknelled. Half a dozen others have been wounded near unto death, and standing around are a number more with banded limbs, thirsting for vengeance. You guided



Captain Malcolm plunged forward on his Face, dead.

the men who inflicted this loss on us. For the like of you there is no mercy. Bring on the rope!"

A rope was brought, and a noose slipped over Smith's head and tightened around his neck. The eyes of the old man blazed, but there was not a sign of fear. The noose was firmly fixed, the loose end of the rope thrown over a stout limb of a tree and seized by three stalwart troopers. The camp fires cast a fitful light on the scene; the soldiers crowded near; the presence of death caused silence on the part of the most hardened.

"Have you anything to say before we send you to the devil, your master?" asked the captain, as the men stood waiting for the command to pull.

"Nothin'," coolly replied Smith, "except to say you do me too much honor when you reckon I am to blame for your lickin'. As for hangin' me, I am only John Smith of Kentucky, and you be a blamed coward to murder me without a——"

"Up with him!" roared the captain.

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when there came the sharp crack of carbines, and Captain Malcolm plunged forward on his face, dead. Of the three men who had hold of the rope, one fell dead, shot through the heart, while the other two lay groaning, desperately wounded.

"At them, boys!" shouted a shrill voice, and Fred and his party plunged into the midst of the Confederates, shooting right and left. To cut the cords which bound Smith was the work of an

instant, and the next moment he and his rescuers disappeared in the darkness.

So sudden, so unexpected, was the attack that the Confederates scattered in confusion, but the stern voice of Lieutenant Garrard soon rallied them. All they could do was to send volley after volley in the direction the Federals had escaped.

It is now necessary to go back to Fred and his little band to explain what has just been narrated. In their retreat from the place where they had inflicted such punishment on the enemy, they had gone but a short distance before Fred became aware that they were not being pursued, and called a halt. His men gathered around him, but there was no rejoicing over the victory. Instead, they sat on their horses silent, and with gloomy brows. One of their number was missing.

At last Fred spoke. "Boys," he said, "do any of you know what has become of Smith? Was he killed, as—" Here his voice broke, he could say no more.

"I do not think he was killed," spoke up one of the men. "He was a little in advance of me when his horse fell, and I saw him struggling to free himself."

"In his case I am afraid death would be preferable to being a prisoner," said Fred.

"Captain," exclaimed Richard Darling, "you surely do not think they will treat him as—as a spy?"

"That is what I fear. You see he is not a soldier; he is dressed in citizen's clothes."

A cry of anger burst from every man. "Cannot something be done?" was the question asked by all.

"Are you willing to attempt a rescue, whatever the odds?" asked Fred.

"Yes! Yes!" The answer was shouted as by one voice.

Fred looked on his men with a face full of pride. "Boys," he said, "it shall be as you say. With such men as you the impossible is almost made possible. Let us find a place to rest and feed our horses, and I will lay before you my plans."

They turned off the road into a field of corn, beyond which there was a wood. When the wood was reached Fred ordered a halt, told his men to gather some of the corn and give the horses a good feed, "And," said he, "we need some supper ourselves, and while we eat we can talk." After the horses were fed, and the men were eating their scanty meal, Fred told them his plans.

"There is but little doubt," said he, "that the Rebels took their dead and wounded back to that plantation, a short distance from where we made our stand. A little this side of the house a cross-road comes down from the west, and between this road and the house there is a fine grove. We shall find the Rebels encamped in that grove, if I am not mistaken. My idea is to keep through the field until we strike that crossroad. Once across that we can get in their rear. I doubt if they will have any pickets out, except on the main road, for they do not dream of danger. Just the moment it gets

dark enough to hide our movements we shall start. What to do after we get near them depends on circumstances."

As soon as it was dark they started. Carefully working their way through the fields, they at last came to the road spoken of by Fred. Following this down as near to the Confederate camp as they dared, they made a wide gap in the fence and entered the field.

"Notice this place carefully," said Fred, "for when we retreat this is where we want to strike the road."

Once in the field they had no trouble in approaching close to the camp. The final arrangements were now made. Two of the men were to stay with the horses, another one was to try to capture one of the Confederate horses for Smith to ride in case he were rescued. To Richard Darling, one of the men who were to be left with the horses, Fred gave his dispatches, saying: "If I fail to come back, take Prince and leave your own horse, join those who do get back, and ride for Nashville. If none of us come back, you two who are left here with the horses, ride for Nashville."

To those who were to go with him, he said: "We must keep together until we enter the camp, and see if we can learn what has been done with Smith. If we can locate him, we will make our plans. If an alarm is raised, make for the horses, and get away as soon as possible. Remember the plan is to ride west on the crossroad until the first road

leading south is reached. Wait there, not long, for there will be pursuit, but until you are reasonably sure all who have escaped have arrived. Then ride south, and ride hard."

After the instructions were well understood, Fred and his six companions stole noiselessly into the Confederate camp. Their task was an easy one, for the whole camp was so intent on seeing the execution of Smith that a regiment could have walked in on them unobserved. The moment that Smith was rescued, the party made for the horses. As they ran the balls whistled around them, but one by one they reached the horses, and springing into the saddle, were away.

Soon Dick Darling was the only one left. He sat holding Prince by the bridle. Of all those who had gone to the rescue, Fred was the only one who had failed to come back.

"Captain! Captain!" Darling called. The answer was a volley which killed his horse, and he heard the enemy running toward him. With a sinking heart he jumped on Prince and galloped after his comrades. He found them at the rendezvous, anxiously waiting for him and Fred.

"Boys," he exclaimed in a voice which sounded like a sob, "Captain Shackelford is missing."

CHAPTER XIII.

A FAIR PLOTTER.

“MISSING!”

For a moment every one was struck dumb by Darling's words. Their captain dead or a prisoner! They could hardly realize it. Then came a storm of questions, but Darling could tell but little. All that he knew was that he had remained until all but him had gone. He had called aloud for the captain, and for an answer received a volley which killed his horse, and he had to fly to escape capture.

Those who were with Fred in the rescue could not remember seeing him after he cut the cords which bound Smith and then disappeared with the rest of them in the darkness.

“He must have been struck down by a stray ball,” said Darling, in a quivering voice.

“An' all to save my wuthless ole carcass,” spoke up Smith, bitterly. “Boys, you can go on to Nashville; I am not goin'.”

“Not going?” they all cried. “What are you going to do, Smith? Show the white feather, and skulk back to Bowling Green?”

“Take that back! take that back!” cried the old

man, angrily, "or as sure as thar is a God in heaven some of ye will bite the dust."

If they could have seen Smith's face in the darkness, and observed how his hand clutched his revolver, they would have known how near to death some of them were.

"There! there!" they exclaimed. "Forgive us, Smith; we might have known you would not leave us except for some good cause. What is it?"

"I am goin' to try and find out what has become of the captain," was the answer.

"And if you will let me, I will stay with you?" spoke up Darling.

"Good for you, Dick! Thar is no other man I ruther'd have," replied Smith.

Now that it was known what Smith intended doing every man insisted on staying with him.

"Two is plenty," said the old man. "Then, if all stayed, who would tend to the captain's dispatches?"

They had not thought of this. It was of the utmost importance that the dispatches should go through; that was their mission. So it was settled that they should try to reach Nashville without waiting for Smith and Darling.

One of the company, James Craig, was selected as leader. He was about thirty years of age, cool and collected in time of danger, and perfectly fearless. Darling placed the dispatches in his hands, with the remark:

"Let us change horses, Craig. I have the cap-

tain's horse, and the last thing he said to me was to see to the horse, and take him through to Nashville if he didn't come back."

"He does set an awful store on that horse," replied Craig, "and no wonder. He will be a good thing to have if we ride in the night, for he will tell us if any Rebs are near."

So everything was arranged, and with warm grasps of the hands, for feeling was too deep for words, the little squad separated, eight of them riding toward Nashville, the other two sitting on their horses, silent, motionless.

Hardly had the eight disappeared in the darkness when Smith and Darling became aware that a body of horsemen were rapidly approaching from the direction of the Confederate camp.

Hastily withdrawing a short distance from the road, they stopped and listened.

"Here is a road leading to the south," a voice said. "They may have taken it; let's see."

A man dismounted and lighted a match. "Ah!" he exclaimed, "their horses stood here and stamped. And here are fresh tracks leading south. We are on the right track, boys," and mounting, the troop galloped rapidly down the road.

"Boys," said Craig, as they lost sight of Smith and Darling, "I believe our best plan is to make a straight run for Nashville. If not stopped, we can reach the city by morning."

To this they all agreed, but they had not ridden

far when Prince began to be restless and kept throwing his head around.

"Prince scents mischief," exclaimed Craig. "I believe we are being pursued. Out of the road! quick!"

The squad took shelter behind a clump of bushes. Hardly had they done this when a troop of cavalry came galloping by.

"I could have sworn," said one of the passing troopers, "I heard the tramp of horses' feet in front a moment ago. Look well to your arms, boys."

When the sound of the horses' feet died away in the distance, Craig drew a long breath and said:

"That was a close call. If it hadn't been for Prince they might have been on us before we knew it. Good horse!" and he patted the horse's neck.

"They are now ahead of us. What had we better do now?" asked one of the men.

"Take the first road that leads to the left," replied Craig. "In that way I think we can dodge them."

All night they rode without further adventure, and when morning came they were within a few miles of Nashville. Soon they met a Federal train, heavily guarded, going out for forage. The danger was over.

When they reached Nashville Craig at once sought General Negley, the commander of the post, and delivered his dispatches. The general read them, then looked sharply at Craig, and asked, "Are you Captain Shackelford?"

"No, General; the captain is either killed or a prisoner in the hands of the enemy."

"Ah! then you had trouble? No wonder. It's a miracle you got through. Tell me all about it."

When Craig had related all that had happened since they had left Danville the general said:

"I have heard of Captain Shackelford; he is a most remarkable young officer, and it is a pity he is either killed or a prisoner. To you and your brave comrades my thanks are due for bringing the dispatches through safe. Remain in Nashville; in all probability the whole army will be here in a short time." And the interview was over.

But the moment Craig was gone Negley's face assumed an anxious look, and turning to Captain Lowrie of his staff, he said: "These dispatches tell me that Bragg is in full retreat for Tennessee, and Buell is fearful that he may throw a portion of his forces on us before we can be reinforced. But I think our greatest danger is that Breckinridge and Forrest may conclude to attack us before Buell can succor us. I see no reason why Buell cannot get here before Bragg can. But under all circumstances, I am ordered to defend the city to the last man. Our vigilance must be doubled."

We will now return to the Confederate camp. After the death of Captain Malcolm the command devolved on Lieutenant Garrard, a young, brave, and capable officer. When he had restored order and dispatched the detail of twenty men in pursuit of the raiders, he turned his attention to his dead

and wounded. Captain Malcolm and three soldiers were found to be killed, while at least half a dozen were added to the list of wounded. It was the sorriest day Captain Malcolm's company had ever seen. As far as was known none of the attacking party had been hit, yet a chance shot might have struck some one of them. When Lieutenant Garrard spoke of this, a sergeant said: "Lieutenant, I believe at least one of them was hit. Just before the last volley was fired I am certain I heard some one call out, 'Captain! Captain!' as if in distress. May I take a squad of men and search the ground in the direction that they retreated?"

"Certainly, if you wish," answered the lieutenant. "It would make me feel a little better if half of the raiders were found dead."

The search was made, and soon the dead horse of Darling was found, but nothing further.

"Reckon all the Yanks got away," growled the sergeant. "It must have been the fellow whose horse was shot that I heard call 'Captain!' Some of their horses must be carrying double. Clifford ought to overtake them, sure."

On the return of the party one of them stumbled over some obstacle and fell. He muttered a curse and reached out his hand to help himself. He touched something that made him draw it back with a shudder.

"Hello!" he cried, "a dead Yank, as sure as I am born. Boys, we did get one of them."

The supposed dead body was brought into camp.

As the light of the fire fell on the gruesome object Lieutenant Garrard exclaimed, "The Yankee captain, by all that is great!"

He bent down and placed his hand over Fred's heart. "He is not dead by any means," he continued, "but by the looks of his head he ought to be. Let's see how hard he is hit."

An examination showed that a ball had plowed along the side of Fred's head, inflicting an ugly but not necessarily a dangerous wound.

"An eighth of an inch deeper and it would have been all over with him," said the lieutenant, rising up. "As it is, he is badly stunned. Here, Jenkins, take the fellow in hand. You have had enough work to-day to make you proficient."

Jenkins was a kind of rough surgeon, who filled that office in the absence of the regular surgeon of the regiment.

He washed the blood from Fred's wounds, shaved away the hair, drew the ragged edges of the wound together as close as possible, and secured them by strips of court plaster. He then bandaged up the head, and drawing himself up, remarked rather proudly:

"There, I call that a pretty neat job, especially to be done for a Yankee. He is young for a captain, but my! he is a fighter."

"Give him some stimulant; I reckon he is coming around," said the lieutenant.

A spoonful of whisky was given him. Fred gave a deep sigh; the eyelids quivered, then the eyes

opened, and he looked in a dazed way on the group gathered around.

"Where am I?" he asked in a faint voice.

"Among friends," answered one of the men, with a grunt, "friends that will stick closer to you than a brother."

"Am—am I a prisoner?" he questioned, for he began to be conscious that those gathered around were Confederates.

"You be, honey, and will be until you air hung. You cheated us out of one hangin', but we'll have another now," replied the man, brutally.

"Stevens," said Lieutenant Garrard, sternly, "I am ashamed of you; the captain is a prisoner of war; and as such he shall be treated."

The soldiers slunk away, and Fred, although a prisoner, knew that he was in the hands of a gentleman. But with consciousness came the recollection of his comrades. Not seeing them, he looked inquiringly at the lieutenant, and asked, "My comrades—where are they?"

"They have escaped so far," answered Lieutenant Garrard.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Fred, fervently, and the excitement made him sick and faint.

"You must be quiet," said the lieutenant, kindly, and he ordered him to be carried into the house where the severely wounded of the Confederates had been taken.

In the morning Fred felt so much better that he

got up and found that he could walk, although his head swam and ached dreadfully.

Lieutenant Garrard came to him, and told him they were to move. "We shall have to leave several of our more severely wounded here," said he, "and if you feel utterly unable to ride, I will leave you, provided you will give your word of honor you will not try to escape. But we shall march slowly as we take a number of our less severely wounded with us, and I should be pleased to have you accompany us. You know you are all we have to show for a very ugly fight," and he smiled grimly.

"I will try to go, Lieutenant; you are very kind," answered Fred.

"Very well," replied the lieutenant, "we shall start at nine o'clock. By the way, Captain, I have never inquired your name."

"Captain Fred Shackelford, of General Thomas's staff."

"Shackelford! I am acquainted with a young lady of that name who resides in Nashville."

"I have a cousin in Nashville," replied Fred; "Miss Kate Shackelford, daughter of Colonel Charles Shackelford."

"The very same!" cried Garrard. "Captain, I congratulate you on having so beautiful and spirited a cousin," and his face fairly glowed as he said it.

Fred looked at him and tried to smile, but it was a painful effort. "Lieutenant, can I offer my congratulations in advance?"

Garrard blushed, and answered, "You are premature; the young lady has not said yes yet."

Fred stood the journey better than he expected. As the lieutenant had said, they marched by easy stages, and it was not until the evening of the second day that they crossed the Cumberland River, several miles below Nashville, and arrived at the headquarters of General Forrest, which were in a spacious and beautiful mansion house situated about two miles from the river.

Into the presence of this officer Fred was conducted. Lieutenant Garrard made his report, and the general's brow darkened as he listened, until at last he burst into a terrible fit of rage.

"Do you mean to tell me," he exclaimed, with a fearful oath, "that ten men inflicted this loss on you? That you allowed your camp to be raided and a prisoner released by such a pitiful handful of men? You are a disgrace to your profession; I shall have you court-martialed and dismissed from service. Consider yourself under arrest."

Garrard turned as pale as death. He unbuckled his sword and handed it to Forrest, with, "One word, General."

"Not a word! not a word! Begone from my presence."

Stung to desperation, Lieutenant Garrard replied: "You shall hear me, General Forrest, whether you wish to or not. As to the implication that I am a coward, the man who dare say it, be he general or private, lies. I was not in command of the troop;

Captain Malcolm was, and you should know it. Neither he nor any one else was to blame for the repulse. The road was narrow, an unpenetrable thicket on each side, and it was simply impossible for the men to stand up against the rain of balls from their repeating rifles. We were so close after them that there was no thought of an advance guard. If you had been there it would have been no different. As to the camp being raided, I requested Captain Malcolm to place a strong guard around the entire camp, but he laughed at my fears. He thought the pickets on the roads enough. After Captain Malcolm's death I did all any officer could do. Now I am ready to go." And he wheeled to go out.

Forrest, like Nelson, was violent, but rather liked a man who stood up for his rights and dared to talk back.

"Hold on, Lieutenant!" thundered Forrest. "Talk that way to your general, will you? But, gad! I rather like it; it shows spirit. Captain," turning suddenly to Fred, "what do you say about the conduct of Lieutenant Garrard?"

"That he is a brave and gallant officer, General, and if you disgrace him you will do a great wrong," replied Fred, promptly.

"Here is your sword, Lieutenant; buckle it on again. I forgot you were not in command. As for Captain Malcolm, he has gone beyond my jurisdiction. Now, Captain," to Fred, "I will attend to your case. Your name?"

Fred gave it.

"What was your business so far away from your command?"

"I was carrying dispatches from General Buell to General Negley at Nashville."

"Ah! where are the dispatches?"

"Safe in the hands of my comrades who escaped."

"Where was Buell when you left him?"

"At Danville, just starting in pursuit of Bragg."

"I can imagine the tenor of your dispatches, Captain. It was for Negley to hold Nashville until reinforcements came."

"I did not read them, General; they were sealed."

"Buell evidently intrusted his dispatches in good hands. I believe you say your name is Shackelford?"

"Yes, General."

"And at one time you were connected with Nelson?"

"Yes, General."

"I have heard of you, Captain. We have drawn a greater prize than I thought; I reckon we shall have to keep you a while."

Fred, who had been standing all this time, suddenly grew faint, and would have fallen if an officer had not caught him.

"Excuse me, Captain," said Forrest. "I did not realize you were wounded," and he at once ordered Fred to be taken to an upper room, and laughingly remarked to the corporal who had him in

charge, "You would better watch him closely, even if he is wounded, for he is a slippery fellow."

As Fred was leaving the room he heard Forrest say to Garrard, "You are excused now; report here to-morrow at one o'clock; the young lady will be here."

Fred's head was splitting; he staggered as he walked, but the words, "the young lady will be here," caught his ear, and for some reason made an impression on him. A good night's rest worked wonders for Fred, and after partaking of a good, substantial breakfast, he declared he felt quite like himself.

A surgeon dressed his wound, and told him he would have to keep very quiet for a few days. The first thing that he did when left alone was to examine his room carefully. It was in one end of the house, and the large chimney which is a feature of the old plantation houses of the South was in one corner. The chimney had been papered, and in running his hand over it Fred discovered that a place which had been cut for a stove-pipe had never been filled—simply papered over. A picture partially covered the place. Pushing aside the picture, Fred made an aperture in the paper, and applied his ear to it. He started back in surprise; the chimney was a perfect conductor of sound, and every word uttered in the room below could be distinctly heard. Here was a discovery.

"I reckon," said Fred to himself, "I shall be feel-

ing so badly to-day that I shall need perfect rest. I may hear something worth hearing."

When his dinner was brought in he was found in bed and complaining of a severe headache; "but" said he, "all I want is perfect quiet, and I shall be all right."

So he was left in peace, but in the hall outside of the door the steady tramp of a sentinel could be heard. Forrest was going to take no chances on his escape.

About one o'clock Fred became aware that something unusual was going on downstairs. The sound of galloping horses was heard, and there was a confused murmur of voices. He stole noiselessly to the chimney, and placed his ear to the aperture. General Forrest and a number of officers were in the room below, and from their talk Fred learned that they were expecting General Breckinridge, and that some important movement was to be discussed. Presently a commotion arose out of doors, which was occasioned by the arrival of the general. At this time General John C. Breckinridge was in command of all the Confederate forces around Nashville. After the customary ceremonial of receiving the general commanding was over, the room was cleared, and Breckinridge and Forrest were left alone.

"I hear, General," said Breckinridge, "that a small raiding party of your forces has had an unfortunate affair."

"Yes," replied Forrest; "and the bitter part is, it was inflicted by so few men. There were but eleven in the Federal party."

"Am I to understand that eleven men met over one hundred of yours and inflicted a loss of nearly thirty, and then escaped?" asked Breckinridge, in surprise.

"That is about the way of it, General. I am ashamed of it, but it is a fact. The most shameful part is, my men allowed their camp to be raided and a prisoner released. I placed Lieutenant Garrard under arrest, but on ascertaining that the blame rested with Captain Malcolm, who was killed, I released Garrard, who is really a most gallant officer. Then we need him now. It is through him that the business we are to discuss this afternoon was brought about. Garrard brought in one prisoner, however, the leader of the Federals—a Captain Shackelford."

"What! Fred Shackelford?"

"The same, General."

"Forrest, that boy may not be able to do the damage he did us in Kentucky, but the time was when his capture would have been worth a brigade of men. He it was who made our plans miscarry in Kentucky."

"I know the whole story, General. I believe he is dangerous enough now to keep," replied Forrest.

"You are right; keep his name off the exchange list. Is he dangerously wounded?"

"I think not, although the surgeon has enjoined complete rest. Danger of brain fever, I believe."

"I often wonder," said Breckinridge, "how General Shackelford could have such a son. He is one of our best and bravest generals. But what was the boy doing down here?"

"He was carrying dispatches from Buell to Negley."

"Ah! did you get the dispatches?" asked Breckinridge, eagerly.

"No, but it is easy to imagine what they were. They were to tell Negley to hold on until he could be reinforced, and in all probability he was told about what time that would be. This, General, brings me to the reason why I have sent for you. Nashville must be taken, and that right away, or it will be too late."

"But, General, are we not too weak to storm the city? You know we have discussed this question before, and decided that it would be a mistake to try to take it by assault."

"The plan I am about to present does away with an assault. It can be taken by strategy."

"But how? The enemy is very alert."

"By obtaining the countersign, and marching troops into the city under cover of darkness."

"Who will bell the cat; or, in other words, who will get the countersign?" asked Breckinridge, with a laugh.

"We have that arranged," answered Forrest. "Ah! There she comes now," he continued, as the

clatter of horses' feet was heard outside, and a moment later Fred heard the voice of Lieutenant Garrard, and his heart stood still when he heard the lieutenant introduce his companion as Miss Kate Shackelford.

"Shackelford?" said Breckinridge. "Any relation to—" A look from Forrest stopped him. "A daughter of Colonel Charles Shackelford," added that general.

"Miss Shackelford," continued Forrest, "has made arrangements to have the countersign to-morrow night. She will come out and give it to us. The plan is to enter the city by the Hardin pike. I have a company dressed in Federal uniform, who will give the countersign and then dispose of the guards. The road once open, I shall march as many troops as possible into the city before discovery. Through Miss Shackelford I am in correspondence with friends in the city. They have organized to help. Every patrol along the Hardin pike, clear up into the heart of the city, will be captured, leaving the way clear. Everything has been arranged; only your consent and coöperation are lacking."

Breckinridge looked at Forrest in surprise. "The plan is an admirable one," he replied, "but how can this young lady be so sure that she can get the countersign to-morrow?"

If Fred could have seen Kate as Breckinridge asked this question he would have seen a deep blush

mantling her cheek; as it was, he could only listen in breathless attention.

"Miss Shackelford can explain if she wishes," said General Forrest, bowing to her.

The reply was long in coming. At length Kate asked, in a trembling voice, "General Breckinridge, is it wrong to deceive—to be a hypocrite for the sake of the South?"

"War, my child," gently answered Breckinridge, "is nothing but a series of deceptions; the side which deceives the most effectually is the most successful. To deceive one's enemy is the first principle of war."

"I have a lover," began Kate, in a low tone, "a Captain Ainsworth. Oh, how I despise him! but for the sake of information I have encouraged him. I have boasted to him of my love for the hated Union. I have a cousin, a Captain Shackelford, in the Lincoln army, and I said it was he who had converted me. I have completely won the confidence of Captain Ainsworth. Through his influence I get passes to come through the lines to visit a sick aunt. I pretend to play the spy, and carry back information of your movements—information that is true, but that can do no harm. I—I have even promised to marry this man, if he would give me the countersign. I made it a test of his love. I told him I would never marry a man who would not confide in me, even unto death. He has yielded. To-morrow he is officer of the day, and

has promised me the countersign. He will keep his promise."

She stopped, gave a little hysterical sob, and then cried: "You will not despise me, General? It is for the South."

Breckinridge was deeply moved. With that courtliness which made him in manner one of the first gentlemen of his State or nation, he arose and going to her, gently raised the hand of the sobbing girl to his lips, and reverently kissing it, cried:

"Oh, my God! my God! How can the South fail when her fairest and purest daughters dare so much. Child, if I were a priest I would absolve you; as it is, I can only say, God bless you."

Forrest then said: "Here, General, are the plans of the fortifications of Nashville; also a map with the location of every picket-post marked. Miss Shackelford has, indeed, been a valuable ally to us."

Breckinridge examined the plans and map with admiration. Both were drawn with remarkable skill. "Are these the work of your hands, Miss Shackelford?" he asked.

Kate bowed. "It is very little to do for the cause," she said.

After some further conversation regarding details, Kate was dismissed, and was accompanied by Lieutenant Garrard, who rode with her as near to the Union lines as he dared.

"Louis," she said, as soon as they found themselves alone, and she turned to him a tear-stained

face, "how can you love me after what you have heard this afternoon? On my way here you asked me to be your wife. I told you to wait until—until you heard all my confession. You have heard how I have listened to the protestations of love from Ainsworth, how I have even promised to be his wife. Can you—can you love me after this?"

"Darling," cried Garrard, "if possible I would love you tenfold more from what I have heard. To be the husband of the woman who delivered Nashville from the hands of the oppressors is more honor than I dare hope. Dearest, I know how pure, how true you are, and fully realize the agony it has cost you to do what you have done. Talk about the courage which charges to the mouth of the cannon—it is nothing to the courage, the heroism, you have shown. Darling, promise to be mine."

And with drooping eyelids and burning cheeks, Kate spoke the words that made her the affianced wife of Lieutenant Louis Garrard.

When the conference with Generals Breckinridge and Forrest was over, and Kate with Lieutenant Garrard had been dismissed, Fred staggered from his place at the chimney completely exhausted. The information that he had secured unnerved him. Nashville was to fall after all. "O God!" he groaned, "if I could but get away. And to think that Kate, my sweet Cousin Kate, could do as she has done. She has disgraced herself, disgraced the name of Shackelford. Oh! she is vile—vile."

Fred stopped in his ravings. Why should he curse Kate in his frenzy? What had he been doing for a year? How about Conway? Had he not even spied upon his father's guests? He had been rewarded, crowned with honor for what he had done. Why was it worse for Kate to deceive than for himself? But to think that Kate, the pure, straightforward, truth-loving Kate—could deceive, could lie, could even pretend to love, it made him shiver, even if the stake for which she was playing was a city.

According to the details which he had heard Nashville was to be attacked at three o'clock Wednesday morning. It was on Monday he heard the conversation. On Tuesday Ainsworth would be officer of the day. Kate was to get the countersign as early as possible, and then by aid of her pass come outside the Federal lines. Under cover of darkness the troops were to mass on the Hardin pike, as closely to the Federal picket line as possible. When the pickets were captured, the troops were to march into the city.

So excited was Fred with the knowledge he had obtained that when the surgeon called to see him in the evening his pulse was going like a trip hammer.

The surgeon shook his head. "This will not do," he said, and he gave Fred a potion that made him sleep all night.

The next day was one of the most miserable Fred ever spent. He heard Forrest giving orders to

his officers, and knew that the movement for the capture of Nashville had already commenced. He chafed like a caged tiger, and revolved in his mind a hundred schemes to escape. But he had to give them all up. Not only was there a guard in the hall, but under the window on the outside a watchful sentinel paced to and fro. He went to the window, and raising it, leaned out. The sentinel roughly ordered him away.

"I only want to get a mouthful of fresh air," Fred said.

"Very well," replied the sentinel, "you can leave the window open, but keep away from it. My orders are strict."

The day waned; night came. It was very quiet, for most of the troops had gone, and only a few guards were left around headquarters. Fred threw himself on the bed, but could not sleep.

"At three o'clock! at three o'clock! Nashville will fall." The thought kept ringing in his ears again and again.

He arose and went as near the window as he dared, and gazed out into the night. Dark clouds were scurrying across the sky, the wind swept around the house in great gusts, and the leafless branches of the trees creaked and moaned as if in protest. He looked at his watch; it was half-past ten o'clock. Below he could hear the sentinel pacing his beat. He turned wearily, and was going back to bed when there came stealing through the window the low, plaintive note of a night bird.

Fred started as if he were shot. Trembling in every limb, he bent forward in the attitude of one listening intently.

Again the plaintive note came, soft and low. A look of joy came over Fred's face; he knew that friends were near. He must let them know he heard them. Groping his way to a bureau, he struck a light. The guard in the hall opened the door, and putting his head into the room, gruffly asked what he was doing.

"Only getting a sleeping potion that the surgeon left," answered Fred. "I find I cannot sleep. I will put the light out as soon as I take it."

"Very well; see that you do," replied the guard as he closed the door.

But Fred kept the light burning long enough to stand facing the window, and slowly raising his hand, pressed his finger to his lips. He then extinguished the light. The note of the night bird was heard once more, this time a little sharper and shriller. He had been seen and understood.

Noiselessly he dressed himself, then he twisted a rope out of his sheets, and stealthily crept to the window, using his pillows to deaden the least sound that he might make.

Once at the window he lay and listened breathlessly. But the steady tramp, tramp of the sentinel was all he heard.

He lay there for minutes—it seemed to him hours. Could he have been mistaken? Was there no help near, after all?

CHAPTER XIV.

CHANGE THE COUNTERSIGN.

THE night grew darker, great drops of rain began to patter down, and the wind howled mournfully through the leafless branches and around the house.

Suddenly there came to Fred's ears the faint sound of a struggle, then a stifled cry, and a gurgling sound, as of some one choking. Then all was still. But the tramp of the sentinel beneath the window could no longer be heard. Cautiously he looked out of the window. Two shadowy forms were seen bending over some dark object; then the object was lifted and borne away in the darkness. Soon the spectral forms came stealing back, stood under the window, and a low "hist!" was heard. Fred answered with a "hist!" so low it seemed a part of the sighing of the wind. He had already secured one end of his blanket rope, and the other he dropped out of the window. As noiselessly as a cat he descended, and in a moment was in the arms of Smith and Darling.

"Silence!" whispered Smith in his ear, and each one taking him by an arm, bore him swiftly along. In this way they went some distance, but Fred's

faltering footsteps showed how weak he was. At last they halted, and Darling said, "Now, Captain, we can rest; we are out of danger."

"Hurry! hurry!" gasped Fred. "I have no time to explain. Nashville will fall at three o'clock if we cannot get there to give the alarm. Why am I so weak? I must, I will hold out. O God! O God!" he groaned as he sank on the ground, "I can go no further."

"What is it?" asked both Smith and Darling anxiously.

"Nashville is betrayed. Boys, leave me and hasten to the city. Tell Negley that the counter-sign for to-night is known to the enemy. They expect to gain the city by strategy, entering on the Hardin pike. The attack will be made at three o'clock. Go! go quick, and tell Negley all this. Leave me to my fate."

As they did not move, he cried, sharply, "I command you to go."

Smith and Darling were taken by surprise. They but partially comprehended Fred's words, but they knew that in some way he had found out that Nashville was to be attacked at three o'clock, and that if not warned the city might fall.

"A moment, Captain," they replied, and then they withdrew and held a short conference. Returning, Darling said: "Captain, it is only two miles to the river. Once there, we have a skiff concealed with which to cross. On the other side our horses are concealed in a thicket. It is only

seven miles from where they are to Edgefield. We must get you across the river; then you can ride."

"But how can I reach the river?" moaned Fred. "Give me your hand, Darling, and help me up. I must walk."

For answer Darling bent down and lifted Fred in his brawny arms, as if he were a child, and with Smith leading, started for the river at a rapid gait.

"Oh! Darling, you cannot do this, you will kill yourself," exclaimed Fred brokenly; "leave me and hurry on."

"We will never leave you," replied Darling, "we can and will do this; only keep still so as not to make it any harder."

Soon Smith relieved Darling, and thus taking turns they carried Fred to the river. To cross the river and find the horses was the work of a few moments. All this time a cold, drizzling rain had been falling. Owing to their efforts Smith and Darling were perspiring, while Fred was not only wet to the skin, but chilled to the bone. He shook as if with ague, and could not stand.

"I was going to let him have my horse, and find my way in on foot," said Smith, "but it will not do; he is not able to ride. Darling, I am lighter than you, and my horse is heavier than yours; he will easily carry both for seven miles."

"Just the thing," replied Darling, and tenderly lifting Fred he placed him in Smith's arms, and they rode away for Edgefield, a small village on the north bank of the Cumberland, opposite Nashville.

As soon as they struck the main road the horses took a swinging gallop, and kept it up until the outpost at Edgefield was reached.

Here they were halted, and the commander of the pickets, a dapper little lieutenant, swelling with his own importance, heard their story with an air which plainly showed that he thought them impostors.

"Here," said he to a sergeant, "keep these men under guard until morning, and then we will report them, and have their cases investigated," and with great dignity, he wheeled on his heel to go.

His words aroused Fred. "Lieutenant!" he cried, so sharply that that officer turned in such haste that his sword nearly tripped him.

"Do you know," continued Fred, "that I am Captain Shackelford, of General Thomas's staff? I am the bearer of dispatches which must be delivered at once. Send as strong a guard with us as you please, but take us to General Negley as quick as horses can carry us. Refuse, and I will have you court-martialed and shot."

The lieutenant turned red, then white. His dignity was insulted, but he was frightened.

"Take them, Sergeant," he said, "but take a detail of three men with you. See they don't give you the slip. This apparent haste may all be for effect," and with this offering to his dignity, the lieutenant walked proudly away.

The sergeant smiled, made the detail, and in a moment more they were galloping through the

deserted streets of Edgefield, then thundering over the pontoon bridge across the Cumberland, and up the stone-paved streets of Nashville to General Negley's headquarters. The officer in charge stared as the dripping, mud-bespattered group entered, especially at Fred, borne in the arms of Darling.

"Let me down, Dick," said Fred.

Darling placed him on his feet, but had to support him.

"General Negley, quick!" gasped Fred.

"The general did not retire until after twelve," replied the officer, "and left orders not to be disturbed unless the case were imperative."

"It is imperative—quick—or the city will be in the hands of the Rebels," answered Fred.

"Great heavens!" ejaculated the officer. And he ran into the general's private apartments, shouting, "General! General! get up, the Rebels are in the city."

Half awake, in his night-clothes, but grasping his sword, General Negley rushed into the room, crying, "What is it? What is it? The enemy in the city? impossible!"

"General," gasped Fred, "change your countersign—the enemy know it. Their troops are now massed on the Hardin pike. Prepare to meet them there. There is a traitor in your midst. They expect to gain the city by stratagem. Three o'clock is—the—time—set." It was with difficulty Fred got the last sentence out. Outraged

nature asserted itself, and he sank fainting to the floor.

"Who is this?" asked Negley, almost petrified with astonishment.

"Captain Fred Shackelford, of General Thomas's staff," exclaimed Darling. "He has just escaped from the Rebels, wounded, as you see. The enemy have in some manner become possessed of your countersign. They are now massed outside the city on the Hardin pike, and expect to enter by stealth. There is not a second to lose—the time set is three o'clock."

Negley looked at his watch. "Two-fifteen," he muttered. Just then Captain Ainsworth, the officer of the day, came in. "Captain," cried Negley, "mount every man you can, send to every outpost, and have the countersign changed. The new countersign is"—and he strode to Ainsworth and whispered a word in his ear. "Order every one arrested who tries to enter the city on the old countersign."

The captain turned pale, gasped, clutched at his throat, and would have fallen, if it had not been for the general supporting him.

"Why, Ainsworth, what is the matter?" cried the astonished general.

"A—a spasm of the heart," gasped Ainsworth, "it will pass away soon."

There was no time to lose. "Here, Captain Lowrie," said Negley, "you take the captain's place."

"I can go now; it's over," said Ainsworth, and

in a moment, with white face and set teeth, he was galloping through the night, riding like a fiend, and stopping for nothing.

In five minutes couriers were riding in every direction, taking the new countersign to the outposts, with orders for all the guards to turn out. The whole garrison was aroused, and the tramp of marching columns echoed along the pavement.

Officers and soldiers alike wondered what was the matter. Could there be an attack? But where? There was not the sound of a single gun. The drizzling rain still fell, and the soldiers shivered and cursed as they marched.

Just before three o'clock, an officer, accompanied by a lady, rode up to the outpost on the Hillsboro pike. The officer wore a long waterproof coat which effectually concealed his uniform. Being challenged, the officer answered, "Friends, with the countersign."

"Dismount, friends, one advance and give the countersign." The officer dismounted and boldly advanced, and whispered in the ear of the sentinel, "Trenton."

"Wrong," said the sentinel. "Corporal of the guard."

The officer uttered an exclamation of surprise, and made a motion as if to draw a weapon, but armed men, as if by magic, arose around him, and after a terrific struggle he was overpowered.

The lady, seeing the struggle, tottered and would have fallen, if she had not clung to the bridle of

her horse. Just then the roll of musketry came from the direction of the Hardin pike.

"Betrayed!" moaned the lady, releasing her hold on the bridle, and sinking to the earth.

"Heavens! she is a beauty," said the rough soldier who had picked her up and carried her into the light.

The captured officer heard the remark and ground his teeth in impotent rage. The prisoners were Lieutenant Garrard and Kate Shackelford.

The noise of fighting on the Hardin pike increased. The cannon from the forts opened, and great shells went shrieking and screaming down the pike. Like monster meteors they burst in air, lighting up the murky sky for an instant, and then all was dark again. The sound of fighting soon died away. Finding that his plans had been discovered, and that a surprise was impossible, Forrest ordered a retreat. He was furious, and raved like a madman. That his plans had miscarried through some traitor, he believed, and he vowed terrible vengeance on the guilty one, if ever discovered.

He reached his headquarters a little after daylight, wet, cold, and still furious over his failure. Here he was met with the startling intelligence that his prisoner had escaped. For a moment he stood speechless with anger, and then he thundered, "Every one on duty shall be shot. Bring the sentries here."

The sentinel who stood guard on the outside was brought before him. He still showed signs of his

rough treatment. His mouth was cut and torn by a gag which had been roughly forced into it, and his neck was black and swollen from the choking he had received. This is the story that he told:

The rain was falling, and as he was walking his beat he pulled up the collar of his coat to protect his neck. He saw nothing, neither did he hear the slightest sound, but suddenly he felt himself grasped from behind, as if in the arms of a giant. Before he could utter a sound a gag was forced into his mouth, and he was choked into insensibility. When he came to he was bound hand and foot, still gagged, and lying under a tree some distance from the house. Here he was found by the party in search of him.

"About what time were you attacked?" asked Forrest.

"I should judge about eleven o'clock," answered the sentinel; "I had been on guard about an hour."

The guard who stood in the hall outside of the door was then called. He came trembling in every limb, for he expected nothing but death.

He declared he had heard nothing. Was he sure? Did nothing unusual happen? Nothing, unless it was that a short time before he escaped, the prisoner lit his lamp. He at once looked into the room and the prisoner told him he could not sleep, and was looking for a sleeping potion the surgeon had left. He found it, took it, blew out the light, and went back to bed.

"Did he make any signal that any one out of doors might have seen?" asked the general.

"Come to think about it," answered the guard, "just before he blew out the light, he gazed intently out of the window, then put his hand up to his mouth as if scratching his lip, that was all."

"And you heard nothing more?"

"Not a sound. Everything was still. We knew nothing of the escape until it came time to be relieved at twelve o'clock, and the absence of the sentinel under the window was discovered. Then we found him gone, and a rope twisted out of the bed clothes hanging from the window."

Forrest thought a moment, and then said: "It is evident the sentinels were not to blame; let them go. The trouble lies deeper; there are traitors somewhere, and they must be ferreted out. Let us examine his room."

The room was carefully searched, but nothing was found to let a ray of light on the mystery. As Forrest was going out his eye fell on the picture on the chimney; it was hanging awry.

"Take down that picture," he ordered.

It was taken down, and the hole in the chimney was revealed. Forrest stepped onto a chair so that he could look into the chimney. He suddenly gave a start, and placed his ear to the aperture. A look of bewilderment, then of amazement, came over his face. He stood and listened for a time, and then stepped down.

"One thing, gentlemen," he said to his staff, "is

explained, and that is the cause of our failure this morning. That chimney is a speaking tube. Every word uttered below can be distinctly heard. The prisoner heard our plans, escaped, carried the news to Nashville, had the countersign changed, and preparations made to meet us. But who aided Shackelford to escape is still a mystery." And a mystery it always remained to General Forrest.

"Colonel Morgan told me," continued Forrest, "that Fred Shackelford was the sharpest scout in the Federal army, and now I believe him. Let me lay my hands on him again and I will see he don't escape. And what is more," he exclaimed with an oath, "I will have Nashville yet, if I have to take it by assault."

General Forrest tried to make his words good. On the sixth of November, hearing that the advance of Buell's army was only one day's march distant, he massed his forces to storm the city. But just as he was moving to the assault, peremptory orders came from Bragg forbidding it. General Forrest never forgave Bragg for his interference. He always claimed he would have taken the city, if he had been allowed to make the assault.

Poor Fred knew nothing of what was taking place. When he fell fainting he was at once removed to a hospital, where he lay for some days in the delirium of fever.

General Negley instituted a strict investigation of the affair. The threads of evidence were not hard to gather. That the countersign had been

obtained by the girl, Kate Shackelford, was evident. Investigation showed that Captain Ainsworth was her accepted lover, that he had reported her as a stanch Unionist, that he had repeatedly procured passes for her to go outside the lines, asserting that she brought back valuable information. His extreme agitation when General Negley told him to change the countersign was now remembered. He was at once placed under arrest. He refused to make any explanation of his conduct, neither denying nor affirming his guilt. The knowledge that Kate had been false to him, had used him simply as a tool, utterly crushed him. He was a remarkably handsome man, and one who had kept himself singularly free from the temptations which beset an officer in the army. He worshiped his mother and sisters, and judged all women by them. It was remarked of him by his brother officers that if, in his line of duty, he was called upon to deal with the lowest denizens of the levee, he always spoke to them as a gentleman would address a lady. He never forgot they were women. It was such a man whose love Kate Shackelford had won. Sooner would he have believed an angel from heaven could have been false than she. If she had only been true, he could have died for her without a murmur; but now—the thought of her perfidy nearly bereft him of reason.

As for Kate, she believed that Ainsworth had repented and deceived her at the last moment.

She had never loved him, but now she hated him with all the ardor of her being.

A court-martial was instituted, and Kate was brought before it. Her eyes were red with weeping, but she bore herself with calmness and dignity. Her youth, her beauty, her evident distress, impressed every member of the court.

"Miss Shackelford," said General Negley, kindly, "I regret to see one so young, so evidently a lady, accused of so grave a crime as that of being a spy, and of obtaining the countersign for the purpose of leading a hostile force into the city. It may influence the court to be more merciful to you if you will make a full confession and tell from whom you received the countersign."

Kate's eyes flashed. "You should know the traitor as well as I," she retorted, "for it is evident he has proven as false to me as to you."

"You are mistaken," replied the general, "we received the information by the merest chance, and from one who cannot be a traitor—Captain Frederick Shackelford, of General Thomas's staff."

Kate turned faint and dizzy. "My God!" she gasped, "he here? How did he know?"

Just then Ainsworth and Lieutenant Garrard were brought in, heavily guarded. Garrard bore himself like a soldier, but the condition of Ainsworth was pitiable in the extreme. He looked like an old man. His form was bent, his face drawn and wrinkled, his eyes sunken, and he shook as with the palsy.

Kate's eyes grew large with wonder when she saw the two prisoners—the man that she had pretended to love only to betray, and the man whom she really did love. She had been mistaken, Ainsworth had not been false, he had trusted her, been true to her. Conflicting emotions tore her heart, and caused her to struggle for breath. She was recalled to herself by the cold voice of General Negley.

"Miss Shackelford," he said, "we had much rather you had confessed, but we have no need of your confession; we know all. The culprit, the officer who has so dishonored his uniform, stands before us. Captain Ainsworth has been your accepted lover, he has procured passes for you, he has been reporting you as a stanch Unionist. At last he broke the most sacred of military confidences by giving you the countersign. Miss Shackelford, you have caused your lover to sign his death warrant."

Kate saw it all. This man for love of her not only had trusted her with his honor, but his life. Could love do more? How had she repaid him? With deceit—treachery.

A flood of shame, remorse, swept over her. Then came a look of such high resolve that it transfigured her face like unto an angel's. She would save the man who trusted her—who believed in her—save him, if even her life paid the forfeit; and this, not for love of him, but from a sense of justice. One moment had made the girl a woman—a woman with purpose as heroic as that which ani-

mated Charlotte Corday when she plunged the dagger into the breast of Marat.

She stood before that court-martial a queen of tragedy, beautiful, grand. The conflicting emotions which she felt swept in swift succession over her face. Love, hate, pity, loathing, shame, remorse.

"General Negley," she cried, "I will not have the innocent suffer for my acts. I thought nothing could wring from me what I now say. I am a true daughter of the South, every drop of blood in my veins flows in sympathy for the sacred cause. I hate you all. I hate that rag you call the flag of the free. Day after day I saw it floating from the dome of our proud capitol, and I took a solemn oath it should come down. My father is in the Confederate army; many a time have your troops felt the fury of his charging columns; my only brother lies in an unknown grave at Perryville, but he fell by the side of the cannon he had captured. For the sake of my country, that I might free my native city from the pollution of your presence," and as she said it, she raised her streaming eyes toward heaven, "I forgot my love of truth—my—my womanhood. I accepted the addresses of Captain Ainsworth, I pretended to love him. In return he gave me the love of a true man. I repaid him with deceit, treachery. I pretended to love your hateful cause; through his influence I obtained passes; I carried to Forrest plans of your fortifications, the strength of your army. I tried to get

the countersign of Captain Ainsworth, but he refused."

At these words the captain leaned forward, wonder and amazement in his countenance.

The girl went on. "I made it a test of his love. I told him the man that I married must trust me—even with his life. He still refused. I found a sentinel who sold me the countersign—sold it for gold—gold that you miserable Yankees love so well. At first I thought it was he who had betrayed me, but I find I have one of my own kin to thank for that, a traitor blacker than Benedict Arnold. I make this confession from a sense of justice, not from any love I bear Captain Ainsworth. I hate him, as I hate you all who oppress my country; I had rather die than marry an oppressor of the South. Do with me as you like, I am only sorry my plans failed."

She stopped. For a moment there was complete silence. Tears were rolling down the bronzed cheeks of many a stern soldier. General Negley made a motion to the guard to take Kate from the room. Then the members of the court-martial consulted for a short time, and General Negley announced the decision.

"There is no evidence," said he, "that Lieutenant Louis Garrard has ever entered the city as a spy, and he will be held as a prisoner of war. Guards, remove him."

Garrard turned toward Negley an appealing look as much as to say: "I care nothing for myself. What



"Do with me as you like. I am only sorry my Plans failed."

of her?" but the guards hurried him on, and he went out reeling like a drunken man.

"Captain Ainsworth," continued the General, "according to the testimony of Miss Shackelford, and no one can doubt its truth who heard it, has only been guilty of grave indiscretion. Let this be a lesson to you, Captain, not to trust every pretty face. You are released from arrest and can resume your duties."

Ainsworth tried to stammer his thanks, but his voice died in his throat; he was thinking of her who had perjured herself that he might go free.

"As for Miss Shackelford," and the general's voice grew husky, "by her own confession she is a spy, and according to the law of all nations, the punishment of a spy is—death."

At the word "death" Captain Ainsworth sprang to his feet, he stretched forth his arms, his features worked convulsively, he tried to speak, but his voice died away in a gurgle, and he fell forward on his face, a thin stream of blood flowing from his mouth.

CHAPTER XV.

"YOU CONTAMINATE THE AIR I BREATHE."

A SURGEON who was present bent over the insensible form of the captain, and placed his hand over his heart.

"He is not dead," he remarked, after a moment's examination, "but he has burst a blood vessel, and his life hangs on a thread."

An ambulance was ordered, and Ainsworth was conveyed to the hospital, and placed in the same ward where Fred lay tossing and raving with the fever.

After order was restored, General Negley said, "The decree of the court in regard to Miss Kate Shackelford is this: Owing to her extreme youth and also from the fact that she is a woman, it is ordered that she be taken to Fort Lafayette, in New York harbor, and there confined until the close of the war."

Before Kate was removed north she was allowed an interview with her mother and her betrothed, Lieutenant Garrard. The poor girl bore up bravely, but when the weeping, distracted mother took her in her arms for the last time before she was sent north, Kate broke down completely, and clung sobbing to her mother's neck.

Her parting with Lieutenant Garrard was more composed. "Bear up, darling," he said. "Our parting will not be for long. The South will soon win her independence, and then you will be set at liberty. Under the bonny blue flag of the South our nuptials will be celebrated, and we will forget all these days of agony," and as he spoke, his face shone with enthusiasm, and Kate was comforted. Well was it for them, at this moment, that the veil of the future was not parted for them to see what was beyond. They never met again. Kate was conveyed to her northern prison, and Garrard was soon exchanged and joined his regiment.

Fred, in the delirium of fever, knew nothing of the arrest and trial of his cousin. For a week he hovered betwixt life and death, and then there was a change for the better; but it was nearly a month before he was able to hear news of the outside world. Both Smith and Darling haunted the hospital day and night, and when Fred was pronounced out of danger their joy knew no bounds.

The first words which Fred uttered when he came to himself were to ask if the city was safe. At first they did not understand, but when they did and assured him that the attempted surprise was a complete failure, a smile lit up his wan face, and dropping into a quiet slumber he improved rapidly from that time. When he was able to sit up Smith and Darling told him the story of their adventures.

"Hardly had the boys left us," said Darling, "when we heard the party in pursuit of us coming.

We rode to one side and let them pass, the darkness effectually concealing us. As soon as it was light we crept as close to the Confederate camp as we dared, to see if we could discover any trace of you. Imagine our joy when we saw you alive, although wounded.

“‘Dick,’ whispered Smith to me, ‘we will have the captain before we quit, or die in the attempt.’”

“‘Shake, old fellow,’ I whispered back, and we shook hands, promising each other never to give up the pursuit, except with our lives.”

Fred’s eyes grew moist as he heard this. “How can I ever repay you for your faithfulness?” he said.

“Repay?” replied Darling, with a hurt look, “Captain, please don’t talk about rewarding us. We were in hopes,” continued he, “that they would leave you with their badly wounded, and were greatly disappointed when we saw you ride away with them. What to do next was the question. If we only had Confederate uniforms we could follow without much danger. Watching his chance, Smith managed to get possession of two Confederate coats belonging to the wounded men; they had been hung out on a line to air. We put them on and boldly rode after you. If we met a citizen we only had to say we belonged to the detachment ahead, and all suspicion was allayed. The first night, you remember, they took you to a house. It was so closely guarded, we could do nothing. When you crossed the river the next day we were at our wits’ end. But learning from

some negroes that Forrest's headquarters were but a short distance from the river, we at once came to the conclusion they had taken you there. Secreting our horses in a thicket, we located a skiff, and when night came stole it and crossed the river. We suddenly ran onto some pickets, were challenged, and fired on. As we ran away, I heard one of the pickets say, 'Some prowling niggers, probably.' There was nothing for us to do but wait for daylight. We then readily located Forrest's headquarters, but owing to the large force present there was no getting near it. We watched all that day without results. When night came we recrossed the river—we had kept our skiff hid—cared for our horses, and returned to our hiding-place on this side. Not until the afternoon was there any change. Then the troops marched away, leaving the house with only a guard. Now was our opportunity. As soon as it was dark we approached as near the house as possible, and gave the signal agreed upon in Kentucky. At first there was no response, and we began to despair, when suddenly a light was struck in an upper room, and we saw you through the window. Then you gave the sign, and we knew that we were heard and understood. And then in the darkness Smith and I just hugged each other like two girls. I don't know but we cried."

"Now, Dick, don't be a fool," chimed in Smith, but there was a suspicious tremor in his voice.

"Well, Captain," continued Darling, "you know

the rest, how we got away with the sentinel, and you came to us."

"I know I shall never forget your devotion," answered Fred; "two more faithful friends a man never had."

"Look a-here, Captain," said Smith, in an aggrieved tone, "I want you to stop sayin' that. Wasn't you wounded and taken prisoner savin' m--wuthless carcuss?"

"Well, Smith," replied Fred, with a smile "we shall have to call it quits, and say no more."

Smith shook his head as if he thought the obligation was still on his part.

While Fred was in the hospital an incident occurred which must not be overlooked. One day there came through the ward one of those angels of mercy who devoted their lives to the care of the sick and wounded. She was a beautiful girl, but her face wore an expression of the deepest sadness. As she would glide from couch to couch, speaking a word of cheer here, smoothing a pillow there, the eyes of the suffering would brighten, and blessings followed in her train.

No sooner did Fred catch sight of her than he stretched out his arms and cried, "Mabel! Mabel!"

In a moment Mabel Vaughan, whom he had once rescued from a mob in Louisville, was by his side.

"Fred! Fred! is this you?" she exclaimed. "You don't know how glad I am to see you—but not this way—not this way," and she smoothed back the hair from his temple, and pressed as pure

and holy a kiss as ever sister gave a brother on his forehead.

"The sight of you will make me well, Mabel," said Fred, gayly, and it really did seem that her presence was better than medicine.

When some of the officers who had witnessed the meeting between Mabel and Fred rallied him over the beautiful nurse, he looked distressed and said, "Boys, let me tell you her history."

Then he told how he had rescued her from the mob, of the miniature flag she wore on her breast, and afterward how her betrothed wore it, how it was returned to her all crimsoned with his heart's blood, and now she was devoting her life to the cause for which he had died.

They listened to the story, and after that Mabel Vaughan was in their eyes more of an angel than ever. There was not a soldier in that ward but would gladly have laid down his life for her.

There was one in the ward who listened to the story with closed eyes, and who seemed to take no interest in it. This was Captain Ainsworth, who lay on his sick bed praying for death. He thought he could never love or have faith in woman again, yet the very woman that he condemned had perjured herself that his life and honor might be saved.

The month of November had come and gone before Fred was well enough to resume his duties. The army he had left in Kentucky was now camped in and around Nashville. Buell had been relieved of his command. When it was known that

Bragg was on his retreat from Kentucky, Halleck planned in his office at Washington another of his brilliant paper campaigns. He ordered Buell to march into Eastern Tennessee. Buell showed the impossibility of making the movement, and absolutely refused to obey the order. He had already suffered enough for Halleck's mistakes. Halleck responded by removing him. In this Halleck did wisely, for Buell had lost the confidence of his army. Exceedingly unpopular before the battle of Perryville, he was much more so afterwards. As in the summer he had to bear the sins of Halleck as well as his own, so at Perryville he was not only blamed for his own blunders, but for the greater ones of others. To a great degree Buell made the Army of the Cumberland; yet he left it unmourned, and most cordially hated by the great majority of his men and officers.

His successor was Major General William Rosecrans, "Old Rosy," as the boys called him. He was fresh from his great victory at Corinth, and was well received by the army. But the heart of the whole army was with General Thomas; he it was who should have been appointed to the command; it rightfully belonged to him. Halleck made the lame excuse that as he had appointed Thomas once, and he had refused, he could not appoint him again. But no one besides Halleck ever saw the force of the excuse.

Fred did not learn what had befallen Kate until after his return to duty. He was horror-stricken

when told that she had been convicted as a spy and was confined in Fort LaFayette. The whole story was told him. He saw it all. To clear Ainsworth she had convicted herself.

"I remember Ainsworth," said Fred; "he was in the hospital with me. I never saw any one whose countenance expressed such utter hopelessness. He looked to me like a man who wanted to die. No wonder; he should hang himself."

"Hang himself!" exclaimed the officer with whom he was talking, in surprise. "Why?"

"For letting a woman—" Fred stopped; what good would it do to say that Kate had told a lie, and that Ainsworth was really guilty? So he added, "For being a milksop, and being made a fool of by a chit of a girl."

"He evidently was very much in love with her," replied the officer. "It was the fact that he thought she had been sentenced to death that made him burst a blood vessel. But, Captain, I can't blame Ainsworth much. Many a man has sold his birth-right in paradise for a woman less lovely. Zounds! you should have seen her before the court-martial. She put me in mind of a Grecian goddess."

"She is worth a dozen of Ainsworth," said Fred, bitterly, as he turned away. He went to his quarters perfectly dejected. To save Nashville he had imprisoned his cousin, and she a girl nurtured in luxury. What should he do? Go and see her at once? No, she probably knew the part he had acted, and would turn from him with scorn.

"My beautiful, noble Cousin Kate!" he exclaimed, as he walked the floor in agony. "To partly undo the wrong you did Ainsworth, you convicted yourself. I will save you if I have to move heaven and earth."

He at once went to General Thomas and told him the whole story. The General was greatly interested.

"She must be a grand girl," said the general; "it can do no good to keep her in prison longer, as we shall soon move on beyond Nashville, and her power for harm will be gone. What do you want me to do, Captain?"

"Give me a personal letter to President Lincoln, recommending a pardon," answered Fred.

"I will gladly do that," replied Thomas, and the general sat down and wrote the letter. Then he said, "Wait a moment, Captain, I want you to take another letter to the President on some private matters."

It took him much longer to write this letter than it did the other. After thanking General Thomas for his kindness, Fred went to see General Negley. That officer received him with the greatest consideration.

"Captain," he said, with evident emotion, "I shall never forget that it was through you I received the information that enabled me to save Nashville. If the city had been captured I should have been a ruined man. I owe you more than I ever can repay."

"No, you do not, General," answered Fred; "I have come to ask a favor of you, now, which, if granted, will make me your debtor."

"What can it be?" asked Negley, in surprise.

"That you give me a letter to the President, asking him, as a personal favor, to grant a full pardon to my cousin, Kate Shackelford."

Negley's countenance fell. "Captain," he answered slowly, "you have asked me a hard thing. I admire the girl; but there is no doubt of her guilt. She came near losing us Nashville. I have had a great deal of trouble here with the Rebel women. They must be taught they cannot act the spy with impunity. Liberate this girl, and it will encourage the whole brood."

"But if every woman in Nashville should turn spy, they could do little harm now. General, I ask this as a personal favor."

"As a personal favor I will grant your request, but on no other grounds." And the general wrote the letter.

Securing a leave of absence for ten days, Fred started for Washington. He had no trouble in securing an audience with the President. He had never seen Abraham Lincoln before, and looked on his ungainly figure and careworn, homely face with great interest. Through his dark, sorrowful eyes, was seen the great sympathetic soul of the man.

Mr. Lincoln looked at Fred in surprise when he was ushered into his presence. "I was told that

Captain Shackelford, chief of General Thomas's scouts, wished to see me," he said.

"I am Captain Shackelford," replied Fred, modestly.

"Well, well," replied Mr. Lincoln, with a twinkle in his eye, "it does beat all how quick they sprout captains out West; your business, Captain."

Fred told him his mission, and handed him the letters of Generals Thomas and Negley, and also gave him Thomas's private letter.

Mr. Lincoln first read the letters of Thomas and Negley, relative to granting the pardon. "This," said he, taking up the other letter, "you say, is a private communication from General Thomas?"

"Yes, Mr. President." As Mr. Lincoln read, he glanced at Fred curiously. At last he said, "Captain, come to me at nine o'clock this evening; I shall then be free from the cares of state. I want some conversation with you on affairs around Nashville. I will then, also, consider your request."

Fred thanked him and passed out. Going back at the appointed time he found the President alone.

"Captain," said Mr. Lincoln, "General Thomas's letter tells me you have had a most wonderful career, and have performed services of the utmost value to the country. You look young for one who has done so much. You must tell me all about yourself; I have so many grave matters to attend to that a story of adventure will cheer me up."

So Fred gave him a brief account of his life from his meeting with Nelson. When he came to tell

Mr. Lincoln of his riding past the place of his birth the President was greatly amused.

"That," said he, "confirms the Scriptures, 'A prophet hath no honor in his own country.'"

When Fred had finished, the President sat a short time with a look of the deepest sadness on his face; he then said:

"Yours has been a remarkable career, Captain. The spirit of that sainted mother, whose dying hand pointed out the path in which to walk, must have protected you through all your dangers." He suddenly ceased talking, and fell into a reverie. His face assumed a look of the deepest melancholy, and he sighed deeply. Was he thinking of that lonely, neglected grave in Indiana?

Arousing himself, he continued: "Pardon me, Captain, I nearly forgot your errand; your request is granted." With a few strokes of his pen he wrote a full pardon for Miss Kate Shackelford, convicted of being a spy, and handed it to Fred, saying, "Here is what you asked; it is little to give for what you have done. May you still be protected in the midst of dangers."

With a full heart Fred thanked him, and the interview was over. He never saw Mr. Lincoln again.

As fast as the train could carry him, Fred went to New York, and hastened to the fort where Kate was confined. He found her sitting in her lonely cell, the bloom of her cheek gone, but her spirit still unconquered. When she saw who her visitor was, she sprang to her feet, her eyes flashing.

"Why pollute my prison cell with your hated presence?" she cried. "Out of my sight, dog, traitor! You contaminate the very air I breathe."

"Kate! Kate!" exclaimed Fred, "don't; your words cut like a knife. You know not what you say."

"Is it not owing to you that I am here?" she answered, in tones of the utmost scorn. "You betrayed me, you delivered me over to be hanged, for all you cared. You have left me here to languish in this vile place, without one word of pity. Out of my sight before I spurn you!" And she turned her back on him.

"Kate, for God's sake hear me! You do me wrong. I was sick—sick unto death; I knew nothing of your arrest, trial, and sentence. Kate, as soon as I heard, I came to you. I have learned all. I was confined in Forrest's headquarters and overheard your interview with Breckinridge and Forrest. I escaped and gave the alarm, but had no thought of betraying you. I know you received the countersign of Ainsworth, and in the nobleness of your soul you saved him—saved him because he had loved and trusted you, and you had deceived him. Kate, you are a heroine—I am proud of you! But see what I have brought you; how would you like a letter from home?"

In spite of herself the word "home" brought tears to the eyes of the proud girl.

"Put it down," she said, brokenly; "I cannot bear to receive it from your hand."

Fred put the pardon down, and stepped back a

few feet. The girl turned and snatched the letter up. So great was her eagerness she did not notice it was an official document. She was hungry to hear a word from those she loved. As she read, her eyes dilated; then, as she grasped the full import of what she read, the paper dropped from her trembling hands, and with a cry of "O Fred, Fred, forgive me!" she flung herself into his arms, and burst into a flood of tears.

"There, there, Kate, it's all right, don't cry! it's home, mother, Bessie." And taking her by the hand he led her out into the glorious sunlight of heaven.

CHAPTER XVI.

STONE RIVER.

WHEN Fred returned to duty, he found things greatly changed. Of the fine body of scouts he had organized only Smith and Darling remained. The others had been assigned to duty elsewhere, or had been ordered to their respective commands.

General Rosecrans was a stranger to him, nor was General Thomas as highly esteemed by Rosecrans as by Buell. Rosecrans had rapidly concentrated his army around Nashville with the intention of attacking Bragg, who lay at Murfreesboro, only thirty-two miles away. Skirmishes took place almost daily between the outposts of the two armies.

Bragg had placed his army in comfortable winter quarters, thinking that Rosecrans would not venture to attack him. In fact, so harried was Rosecrans by the Confederate cavalry in cutting his communications, that Bragg confidently believed he would be obliged to retreat. To bring this about he sent away nearly two-thirds of his cavalry. Two brigades under John H. Morgan were to operate against the Louisville and Nashville railway,

and two brigades under Forrest were to raid West Tennessee.

Morgan had his usual good luck. He struck the railroad at Bacon Creek, and swept to within twenty miles of Louisville, capturing the forces at Bacon Creek, Nolen, Elizabethtown, and Muldraugh Hill. At the latter place he burned two long trestles, each over a thousand feet long, thus effectually crippling the road. In his report Morgan says that on this raid he captured and paroled 1,877 prisoners, and destroyed over two million dollars worth of property, with a loss of only two killed, twenty-four wounded, and sixty-four prisoners. He was, surely, the scourge of the Army of the Cumberland.

Forrest, at first, was also very successful in his raid, capturing several towns with over twelve hundred prisoners. Among these prisoners was no less a personage than Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, afterwards the celebrated agnostic lecturer.

It is related that a Confederate trooper drew up his gun to shoot Ingersoll when but a few feet from him. But the quick wit of the skeptic saved him.

"Hold on!" shouted Ingersoll, "I have been waiting for the last hour to recognize your blamed old Confederacy."

The witticism pleased the soldier immensely, and Ingersoll was treated with the greatest consideration. But Forrest came to grief on the thirty-first of December at Parker's Cross-Roads, when he was badly defeated with the loss of several hundred men, and most of his artillery.

With two-thirds of the Confederate cavalry gone, Rosecrans saw his opportunity. If he intended to attack Bragg at all, now was the time. While Christmas bells were ringing, and children all over the world were singing, "Peace on earth, good will to men," Rosecrans gave orders to advance, and forty-five thousand men marched forth to battle.

The evening of December 30, 1862, found Rosecrans's army drawn up in battle array before the Confederate hosts. For miles the long lines extended through fields, tangled woods, and cedar thickets. Between Rosecrans's army and Murfreesboro flowed the little stream of Stone River, whose clear waters were destined to run red with the blood of brave men.

As on the death of some barbaric kings hundreds of their subjects were slain to accompany them to the land of spirits, so did the expiring Old Year 1862 demand the slaughter of thousands that he might not pass into the realm of shades unattended and alone.

Rosecrans's plan of battle was complete. At early dawn the army was to take the step forward that would bring on the terrible struggle. Darkness came, and nearly a hundred thousand men sank down to rest, their only covering God's sky, their thoughts far away with the loved ones at home. But, even before a battle, weary soldiers sleep peacefully. There would be no running away on the part of Bragg this time; there would be a battle.

The strength of the opposing armies was nearly equal; the conflict would be a desperate one.

In the silence which rested over the sleeping army, General Thomas and Fred sat talking. Fred had just ridden up and made his last report. He had been over on the right, and had told the general the condition of affairs as he had found them.

After Fred had made his report, General Thomas sat buried in thought for some time, then said:

"I do not like what you have told me, Captain. I sincerely trust things are not as bad on the right as you think." Then with a grave face, and without another word, he turned and sought his quarters.

"What is it, Shackelford, that has so alarmed you about the right?" asked a brother staff officer, who had overheard the last remark of General Thomas.

"Many things," answered Fred. "The line is badly posted for one thing. I heard General Rosecrans tell General McCook so, but that general said it was as good as he could make it, and there has been no change."

"McCook ought to know," replied the officer.

"McCook," answered Fred, "holds the post of danger. You know our army is massed on the left, and Rosecrans is to make his main attack there. McCook is simply ordered to hold his ground. But in my scout this evening I found that the Rebel left extended clear beyond McCook's right. I so reported, and McCook ordered Johnson's division to the right."

"That is one of the largest and best divisions in the army," said the officer, "it ought to hold its own."

"So it had, but what are the facts? General Johnson, the commander of the division, has made his headquarters a mile and a half in the rear of his division."

"What!" cried the officer, sharply, "and occupying the post of danger?"

"That is not the worst," continued Fred; "he has halted his reserve brigade near his headquarters. General Kirk, who commands one of Johnson's advance brigades, came to him and begged of him to send the reserve brigade up to within supporting distance, but he peremptorily refused, and yet McCook told Johnson that he would not be surprised if half of the Rebel army were down on him in the morning. I tell you there is going to be trouble on the right. How I wish General Thomas were in command there."

"So do I," replied the officer, with an oath; "I do not see what Rosecrans is thinking of. Here is Thomas, the ablest general in the army, with the smallest command. Both McCook and Crittenden have larger, and have the posts of danger, and of honor, but I hope it will come out all right."

"God grant it," replied Fred; "but I have my doubts."

Morning—the last morning of the old year—broke cold, gray, and foggy. Rosecrans commenced his movement on the left early. Van Cleve's division

crossed the river without opposition, Wood was preparing to follow when there came the sound of battle from the right. This was what Rosecrans rather expected and wished for. If Bragg massed his forces against McCook, it would make the task of Crittenden so much easier. Surely McCook could hold his ground, and that was all that Rosecrans wished. As the sound of conflict on the right increased, Rosecrans hurried up the movement on the left. His hopes of victory were high. Already he saw Murfreesboro within his grasp.

An aide to General McCook galloped up and told him that the right had been attacked by an overwhelming force.

"Tell McCook," replied Rosecrans, "to hold his ground stubbornly, and if he must fall back, to do so slowly. Tell him to hold an hour, and all will be well. By that time Bragg will have enough to do to attend to his own imperiled right."

The roar of battle grew fiercer, and another aide came galloping furiously to Rosecrans. "The right is crushed!" he gasped.

Rosecrans rode back a short distance and looked. Already across the fields to the right and rear fugitives had begun to drift. The roar of the battle was appalling. Every moment the signs of demoralization and defeat became more and more apparent.

Rosecrans's hopes sank. He saw that now, instead of being the aggressor, he must fight for the very existence of his army.

With a heavy heart, he countermanded the order for the advance on the left, ordered Wood and Van Cleve back from across the river, and turned his horse's head toward the right, where the battle was raging.

Long before day General Thomas was up. He saw that every commanding officer was with his command, every regiment in its place. Just as the sun had begun to dispel the fog, there came from the right the sound of battle.

"The expected has come," exclaimed General Thomas; "McCook is heavily attacked."

"General," said Fred, "let me ride over that way, I may learn something of value."

"You can go," answered Thomas, "but report back as soon as possible; the battle may strike our front at any moment."

When Fred neared the scene of conflict, a terrible sight met his view. First came a few soldiers, fleeing as for their lives, then broken detachments, then fragments of regiments clinging together, turning once in a while, like stags at bay, to fight, only to be borne back again. Johnson's whole division had been broken, shattered as by an earthquake shock.

From the fugitives, Fred learned the whole shameful story. Back in his headquarters, a mile and a half away, Johnson had paid no attention to his division. General Willich, commanding the right brigade, became impatient to see General Johnson, and leaving his brigade, rode back to his headquarters.

He had not reached his destination when the attack came. It was in the nature of a surprise, so unexpected, so swift was it. Through the fog the Confederates had approached the Union lines. They had no skirmishers out, but came on in solid line of battle. Hardly had the pickets discovered their danger when, like a mighty wave, the Confederates swept over them, and on to the line of battle. In five minutes after the first alarm, the right brigades were crushed and in retreat. Willich, hearing the conflict, turned to ride back to his brigade, but was met by the Confederate advance, who killed his horse and captured him. General Kirk, commanding the second brigade, was mortally wounded, leaving the right without a general. Thus the two brigades were shattered and broken at the very first onset.

This is the story Fred heard, and, sick at heart, he rode back at full speed. He found General Thomas cool but anxious.

"How is it?" he cried, as soon as Fred reined in his horse. "How bad is it?"

"As bad as bad can be," bitterly answered Fred. "Johnson's division is annihilated. Davis is being attacked in front, flank, and rear; his right brigade was already giving way as I left. It had to, or be captured. When Davis goes it will be Sheridan's turn, then ours."

"Then you think the whole right will be swept back?" asked Thomas hurriedly.

"Yes," answered Fred. "Hark! Davis is

being driven back now. The roar of battle is sweeping down Sheridan's lines. It will reach us in a moment. Ah! there go the guns of Negley. General, we are in for it."

"Go tell Negley," said Thomas, "of the situation; tell him to look well to his right, but to hold on as long as possible."

The wave of battle now rolled on from right to left, and soon the whole line was engaged. The heavens grew black with smoke. The shouts of the combatants, the shrieks of the wounded, the roll of musketry, the thunder of cannon, all commingled in one dreadful chorus.

Everywhere along the front the enemy was hurled back, except on the right—there they crept around on flank, and in rear, and brigade after brigade crumbled away. The cedar thickets smoked and flamed like volcanoes. Trees and rocks were shattered with shot and shell. At last, after fighting long and hard as only tried veterans under dauntless leaders can fight, out of the cedars the men of Davis and Sheridan were forced. Cannon, with the wheels of the carriages smashed against the rocks and trees, went bounding along over the ground, the horses on the full run. The open fields were soon filled with the shattered regiments slowly seeking safety in the rear.

Rosecrans ordered a new line to be formed on rising ground along the Nashville road. But the Confederates had to be stopped, or they would be

upon the line before it could be formed, and all would be lost.

Now came the supreme moment for the heroic Thomas. On him rested the salvation of the army. He it was who must check that headlong pursuit. Turning to Fred, he said:

“Go tell General Rousseau to change front to the right, to throw his division in between the retreating army and the enemy, and to hold his position until ordered back. Tell him to do this if every man falls.”

The hero of Perryville smiled grimly when he received the order. “Tell General Thomas,” he said, “it shall be done.”

Throwing his division into a depression in the open field, a short distance from the cedars, Rousseau formed his lines, and awaited the onset. He did not have a minute to wait. Out of the cedars the exulting Confederates poured, confident of an easy victory.

Instead of a fleeing, panic-stricken mass as they expected, they were confronted by a solid line of men. Before the withering volley of Rousseau's legions they reeled and staggered, and then broke and fled wildly back into the cedars. But it was only to rush out again more determined than ever, to be driven back once more.

For twenty minutes the conflict raged; for twenty minutes the smoke arose in great clouds; for twenty minutes that human torrent of Confederates was held back.

General Thomas sat on his horse, and without changing countenance watched the dreadful conflict. At the end of twenty minutes he said to Fred, "Go tell Rousseau to fall back, the line is formed."

Through the smoke and iron tempest Fred rode. His horse went down.* Catching a riderless one, which came galloping by, he mounted and dashed on.

Rousseau received the order, and with their faces to the foe, his men fell back, leaving nearly half of their number dead and wounded. It was the turning point of the battle. There was to be no more retreating. Like a great door the army had swung back, until the line ran at a right angle with the one held in the morning. Only the extreme left held its position. It was the pivot on which the army had swung. This point, known as the Round Forest, now became the key to the battlefield. This taken, Bragg's victory would be complete. Against the Round Forest Bragg now hurled his legions in overwhelming numbers. They were flung back only to re-form and come on again.

Rosecrans saw the danger, and rode down into the thickest of the fight to encourage his men and to hurry forward reinforcements.

His staff was scattered, only his chief of staff, Garesche, being with him. He asked General Thomas for an aide, and Fred was sent to him. Through the tempest of shot and shell, accom-

*Fred never rode Prince in time of battle, if he could avoid it. The horse's life was too valuable to him.

panied by Garesche, Fred, and three orderlies, Rosecrans rode. One after another the orderlies went down in death. Suddenly Fred saw the head of Garesche disappear, as if by magic, the red blood spouted high, and then the headless trunk toppled to the ground. Covered with the blood of his beloved Garesche, with white face and compressed lips Rosecrans dashed on, and the Round Forest was reached.

“Hold! Hold!” he shouted, “Reinforcements are on the way!” The soldiers recognized their commander, and cheer after cheer rent the air.

Napoleon at Lodi was not a grander figure than was Rosecrans when he took that ride to the Round Forest.

It was Nelson’s old division that held the Forest. Fred recognized the familiar faces, and with soul on fire, he rode along the line, swinging his hat, and cheering like a maniac.

The powder-begrimed soldiers caught sight of him, and a shout went up of “Nelson’s young scout! Nelson’s young scout!”

A color-bearer waved his flag at him and cried, “It was presented to us by Nelson; a reward for valor at Shiloh. No—” The words died on his lips, and he pitched forward on his face dead—a ball had pierced his brain.

Before the flag which fell from his dying hands had reached the ground, it was snatched by a young sergeant and waved aloft. The hands which held it up were those of Hugh Raymond. He had

been exchanged, and was now back with his company.

Fred had time only to wave a salute to the young soldier when the Confederates came sweeping forward to the charge once more, and clouds of smoke veiled the scenes of carnage enacted.

Along the whole line the battle now raged, but firm as adamant the Federals stood, and everywhere the Confederates were driven back. The short winter day drew to a close, and the sound of battle died away.

In the darkness, Federal and Confederate commingled, picking up and caring for their dead and wounded. It was a work of mercy in which neither side was molested.

The light of the new year dawned, but the conflict was not renewed. All day the armies lay like two great wounded beasts growling at each other. Now and then a great gun would spit fire and smoke, and a shell would go shrieking on its way, as if challenging a renewal of the battle. Spiteful skirmish firing would break out for a time, and then die away in scattered shots. The carnage had been so great the day before, both armies had to breathe.*

*The battle of Stone River, for the number of men engaged, was one of the bloodiest battles of modern times. The actual number of troops engaged on both sides was 85,000. Of this number 20,000 were killed and wounded, or nearly twenty-five per cent. Besides his killed and wounded, Rosecrans lost nearly 4,000 prisoners. His total loss was thirty-one per cent of his entire force. In addition to this, Wheeler raided the rear, and destroyed nearly 1,000 wagons and killed thousands of horses and mules. The turnpike from Lavergne to Murfreesboro was one scene of destruction, half-burned wagons and the car-

On the afternoon of the second of January Bragg massed his forces for the last desperate effort. Then came that magnificent charge of Breckinridge's division, a charge that was as daring as Pickett's charge at Gettysburg. Fifty cannon smote his ranks with their iron hail, and bleeding and torn, his division was hurled back.

The struggle for the possession of Murfreesboro was over. On the night of the third of January Bragg retreated, leaving some two thousand of his wounded, but no munitions of war. Rosecrans won Murfreesboro, but nothing more. But for Johnson the victory might have been a great one. As for General R. M. Johnson, no excuse he could give, nothing he ever did afterward, can atone for his criminal carelessness at Stone River. From their bloody graves hundreds of heroic dead cry out to accuse him.

casses of animals literally paving the way. At the close of the first day's fight, Rosecrans was worse defeated than was McClellan in any of his battles before Richmond, than Hooker at Chancellorsville, or even than he himself was when he fled from the field of Chickamauga. It was only by hanging on that he won. Neither general kept any reserve. The field of Stone River is one that the North and the South can point to with equal pride. Here, nearly equal in numbers, the men of the North and the South battled for three days before Bragg sounded the retreat, and then it was with ranks unbroken, and a rear so solid that it bade defiance to pursuit. It was so nearly a drawn battle that neither side has cause to boast, except of the valor of its soldiers. Stone River, like Chickamauga, is the common heritage of the American people.

CHAPTER XVII.

A VALIANT HUSBAND.

FOR six months after the battle of Stone River the Army of the Cumberland made no advance. But during this time there were several minor engagements which arose to the dignity of battles, to say nothing of innumerable skirmishes. The Confederate cavalry, under Morgan, Wheeler, and Forrest, continually harassed the outposts, and made a number of important captures of isolated commands.

On the third of February Wheeler and Forrest, combined, made a determined assault on Dover, near the site of Fort Donelson, but after several hours of desperate fighting were repulsed with the loss of several hundred killed and wounded.

Among the killed was Lieutenant Louis Garrard, the betrothed of Kate Shackelford. During the fight Lieutenant Garrard was conspicuous for his bravery, and was killed by a bayonet thrust while inside a line of entrenchments he had carried.

Fred was shocked when he heard of Garrard's death, for he had conceived a strong attachment for the gallant Confederate officer. He at once repaired to Nashville, where he found Kate completely prostrated with the news.

"Oh, Fred!" she wailed, "go and get his body. It fell into the hands of the Federals, and you know how the 'dead Rebels,' as they call them, are buried."

So Fred went to Dover, procured the body, had it placed in a neat metallic casket, and brought it to Nashville.

Poor Kate! How Fred pitied her as she hung sobbing over the dead body of her lover! Yet she was but one out of millions stricken by the war. For four long years this was a land of tears and agony.

Under the direction of General Thomas, Fred had again organized a small company of scouts, and these few men became as great a source of trouble to Morgan and Wheeler as those raiders were to the Union forces. At the earnest request of Fred, Hugh Raymond had been detailed as one of his company. As for John Smith of Kentucky, he was continually chafing because Morgan was not captured.

"It 'pears to me," he said to Fred one day, taking a big chew of Kentucky twist, "that our ginerals is a big set of mutton-heads. Here Morgan goes scootin' and cavortin' 'round, and doin' jist as he blame pleases. Blast my hide! give me the command of a rignment, an' I will catch him, myself."

"Now, Smith," replied Fred, with a smile, "you are reflecting on your captain."

"No, I ain't," answered Smith, with vehemence.

"You hev had command of no rigiment. If you had, Morgan would hev bin gobbled long ago. Hevn't we whipped him every little brush we hev had with him?"

"We have given him a little trouble, that's so, Smith."

"A little!" answered Smith, with a toss of the head. "If it hadn't been fur us Morgan would hev had half the army by this time. Jist look at Forrest over on the right, gobbling some of our men most every day, jest because we air not thar."

"You mean the Thompson Station and Brentwood affairs, Smith, do you not?" asked Fred.

"Yes; nice affairs, wa'n't they?"

"Well, Smith, you should remember that General Gilbert, the hero of Perryville, was in command at Franklin at that time."

"That's so, an' he put his men in their little beds to sleep, jest as they did at Corinth, and in the mornin' Forrest and Van Dorn had 'em. Darn such ginerels, I say!"

"Pretty well put, Smith," answered Fred, laughing, "but I have news for you. We are to go on a scout to-night, and try to locate Morgan."

"Hull company goin', Captain?"

"No; I shall only take you and Darling and Hugh."

"Good; I am jest dyin' fur a little excitement."

"You may get more excitement than you want, Smith," replied Fred. "We shall start about dark, so be ready."

A little after dark Fred, accompanied by the three named above, left Murfreesboro by the Liberty pike. A rapid ride of two hours took them beyond Milton, where they ran into a squad of Morgan's men, and a few shots were exchanged. The fact that neither party knew the strength of the other made both wary. Morgan's men soon fell back. Fred now left the pike and took a rough country road; to stay on the turnpike was too dangerous, and he wanted to locate Morgan's main force if possible.

After going several miles, they came in sight of camp-fires, and Fred knew that Morgan's whole force was before him. Advancing cautiously they came to a house from which a light was still gleaming, late as it was. As they looked, the door of the house opened, the sounds of voices and laughter were heard, and soon three Confederate officers came out, mounted their horses, and rode away toward the camp-fires.

"Wouldn't that have been a fine haul!" whispered Hugh, regretfully, as they disappeared in the darkness.

"There may be more in the house," replied Fred, "at least we may be able to get some information. We are as close to Morgan as we can get with safety."

A hurried consultation was held, and it was agreed that Smith should interview the house, the others holding themselves in supporting distance. Riding boldly up to the door, Smith called out, "Hello! in thar!"

There was a sound of low whispering, of shuffling feet, and then a voice asked, "Who is thar?"

"A Kentuckian, looking for Morgan's command," answered Smith. "Open the door."

There was more whispering, and then a woman's sharp voice said:

"Morgan's command is in camp not over a mile from here. You can't miss it."

"But I want to ask some questions; open the door. A party o' Yanks is near; they will be here in a few minutes."

There was an exclamation of surprise, and then a man's voice was heard expostulating with the woman, but she ended the argument by saying: "Out of my way, Nathan! If you are afraid to open the door, I am not."

There was the sound of a key turning in the lock, the door was thrown open, and the form of a woman darkened the doorway. Smith stared at her in surprise. She was large, very large, but her form was as perfect as if carved by the hand of a sculptor. Her hair, which was luxuriant, shone in the lamplight like burnished copper, and her complexion would have been the delight of a city belle. Despite her size she was a strikingly handsome woman, and would have attracted attention anywhere. Behind her stood a meek-looking little man who kept saying, "Now, Maggie, don't be rash! don't be rash!"

"Shut up, Nathan," commanded the woman,

and then to Smith, "Did you say a party of Yanks were near?"

"Yes, right at my heels."

The woman sprang back in the house, snatched a long dinner horn from a peg, and coming to the door, commenced to blow it vigorously.

"What's that fur?" demanded Smith.

No answer, but toot! toot! toot! went the horn.

"Stop that!" commanded Smith, striking down the horn.

By this time, seeing something was wrong, Fred and Darling appeared on the scene, leaving Hugh to care for the horses.

"Yanks!" yelled the woman, as she attempted to give the horn another toot.

"Yanks!" shrieked the man, as he turned and made a dive under the bed.

The horn was again struck down, and with a curse the woman made a dive for a revolver which lay on a bureau. But Fred's quick eye detected the movement, and with a bound he caught her before she reached the weapon. She fought with the fury of a tiger, and it would have gone hard with Fred if Darling had not pinioned her arms from behind and held her as in a vice. As it was, she tried to bite, and emitted yell after yell.

"Madame," said Fred, firmly, "stop that noise or I will have you gagged."

"Make this ruffian let me go," she panted.

"If you promise to behave yourself and make no

noise I will have him let you go. If you do not, I will have you bound and gagged."

Seeing the uselessness of resistance, she promised, and Darling set her free.

"Where is Nathan?" she asked, looking around.

"Those must be his feet sticking out from under the bed," laughed Fred, as he pointed to the offending members.

"Oh, the coward! the coward!" she ejaculated. "If he had only fought like a man."

"Let's see what Nathan looks like," said Fred.

"Darling, pull him out."

Darling seized hold of the protruding feet, and with a sudden jerk landed Nathan in the middle of the floor. Then taking him by the ear, he raised him to his feet and stood him before his incensed spouse.

"There he is, Maggie," said Darling; "what shall we do with him?"

"Look at him!" cried the woman, with the utmost scorn in her voice. "See him shake! Oh, the coward! the coward!" "Look at him!" she continued. "Isn't he a nice specimen for a woman to be tied to?"

The demon of mischief took possession of Fred, and winking at his companions, he solemnly said: "Boys, it is plain to be seen that Nathan here has played the craven, and deserted his dear wife in the hour of her extremity. What shall be his punishment?"

"Death!" said Darling, in a deep sepulchral voice.

"Death," echoed Smith.

The woman started, looked earnestly at Fred, then seeing by his countenance that nothing serious was contemplated, she turned away as if she had no further interest in the proceedings.

The man fell on his knees. "Oh! mercy, mercy!" he gasped.

"A husband who so cowardly deserted his dear wife as you have done," answered Fred, "deserves no mercy. But she shall plead for you. It is for her to say whether you shall live or not."

"Maggie, Maggie!" wailed Nathan, "you will not let these men murder me! Tell them what a good husband I have been; how I love you!"

Maggie stood unmoved.

"She refuses to plead for such a cowardly wretch," said Fred. "Take him out, boys, and hang him."

"Maggie! Maggie!" shrieked the thoroughly affrighted husband, "don't let them hang me. Oh, Maggie!" and the wretch groveled at her feet, and tried to kiss the skirt of her dress.

She spurned him away with her foot.

"No use, Nathan," coldly remarked Fred, "your wife declines to say a word in your favor. I reckon you will have to hang."

"Maggie! Maggie! speak. I will be your slave. Oh! mercy! mercy!"

"Get up, Nathan Beech," said the woman, curtly. "Such a coward as you don't deserve to live, but I will give you one chance for your life. Promise

to join Captain Mathews's company and fight for your country like a man, and I will ask these Yankees to spare your life."

"I know what you want," whined Nathan. "You want to get me killed, so you can get Captain Mathews. Oh! I have seen you billing and cooing together."

"Take and hang him!" snapped Mrs. Beech, her eyes flashing fire.

"Oh! Maggie, I didn't mean it! I will jine! I will jine!"

"I don't know that I can allow Nathan to become a soldier, Mrs. Beech," remarked Fred. "He will make such a valiant one I am afraid we Yankees will stand no chance."

"No danger," replied Mrs. Beech, with a curl of the lip.

"Well, Nathan," continued Fred, "as I promised your wife to do as she said, I shall have to abide by her decision. But see that you do as she desires, or it will be the worse for you."

"Leave him to me. Let him back out if he dares," said his wife, ominously.

"By the way, Mrs. Beech," exclaimed Fred, "I came nearly forgetting something. Give Captain Mathews my compliments. Tell him Captain Fred Shackelford sends them."

"Do you know Captain Mathews?" asked the woman, turning an inquiring look on him.

"Quite well, madame; he stole my horse."

"You lie. Captain Mathews is a gentleman.

It's no stealing to take a horse from a thieving Yankee."

"Tut! tut! Maggie, don't call names. Was Captain Mathews one of those officers who rode away just as we came?"

"Yes, yes," spoke up Nathan. "Blast his picture! He is hanging around here half of his time."

"Nathan!" said his wife, casting a withering look on him.

"I didn't mean anything, Maggie—indeed I didn't. I'll jine the company right away," stammered Nathan, turning pale.

"Well, Mrs. Beech," politely remarked Fred, as he took off his hat and made a low bow, "I am sorry, but the time has come for us to part. Many thanks for your cordial reception. As for Nathan, I wish you joy of so valiant a husband."

For answer the angry woman consigned Fred to a very warm place.

"Poor Nathan," laughed Fred, as they rode away; "it ought to be a relief to him to be in the army."

"Yes," replied Darling, "the army should be a very quiet, peaceful place for Nathan."

"I don't blame the 'oman," growled Smith. "Andrew Jackson! how did she come to marry such a sniveling coward? I rather like that 'oman, I do."

"Hello!" cried Fred, "has Nathan another rival?"

"Not if Smith knows himself," answered the

old scout; "but I kinder like the sperrit of that 'oman, danged if I don't. She has grit." And Smith took his accustomed chew of tobacco, and relapsed into silence.

On Fred's return to Murfreesboro he made his report to General Thomas, and told him where Morgan was encamped.

"How I would like to catch him!" said the general. "Our communications are not safe a single day while he is at large. I would send a division against him, but it would be no use; he would run. We ought to have more cavalry. Rosecrans has urged this on Halleck, but he seems deaf to all entreaties. I do not see that we can do anything."

"It's a hard case, General," answered Fred.

"Captain," suddenly said General Thomas, "I am going to risk sending out a small force against Morgan—one that he may be induced to attack. A good infantry brigade ought to whip him. How many men do you think Morgan has?"

"I should say at least three thousand; but a good infantry brigade of fifteen hundred, with a battery, ought to hold their own against him, especially if the commander be the right kind of man. I don't believe Morgan would attack a larger force. He is wary."

"I will try it," answered the general. "Hold yourself and scouts in readiness to accompany the brigade to-morrow."

The next morning Colonel A. S. Hall's brigade

of General Reynolds's division was ordered to march after Morgan. If he showed any inclination to attack, they were to draw him as near Murfreesboro as possible, select a good position, and fight him to the death. Reinforcements would be sent if necessary.

Marching northeast on the Liberty turnpike, Colonel Hall met with no serious resistance until the second day out, when he reached a point beyond Statesville. Here Fred brought back word that Morgan's whole force was advancing.

Morgan, through his scouts, had ascertained the strength of Colonel Hall's command, and anticipated an easy victory. Colonel Hall, as soon as he received the intelligence from Fred that Morgan intended to fight, commenced to fall back. This made Morgan more sanguine of victory, thinking the Federals were trying to avoid battle, and he eagerly pressed forward.

On reaching a point near Milton, Colonel Hall formed his men in a circle around a hill, posting his artillery on the summit, so it could be made to bear in any direction.

Hardly was the line formed before Morgan's men were on them, charging with terrific yells. But the charge was easily repulsed.

Morgan found that he had not as easy a task as he anticipated; so he dismounted his men, surrounded the hill, and charged from all sides, only to be driven back. Time after time did the Confederates charge with the most desperate valor, but

everywhere they were met with solid ranks, and were forced to fall back.

In one of these charges a young officer led his company to the very muzzles of the Federal guns. Suddenly the officer found himself alone. His men had been shot down or had retreated. Surrender he would not; to retreat was death. A hundred rifles were leveled on him. He calmly folded his arms and awaited the fatal volley. To his horror Fred recognized his cousin, Calhoun Pennington. He tried to cry out, but his voice died away. But no rifles blazed. Along the Union lines ran the cry, "Don't shoot! don't shoot! He is too young and brave to die!"

Not a shot was fired, and a cheer swept along the line. Calhoun acknowledged it by raising his hat, and turning, walked calmly back.

Fred sobbed for joy. "Boys," he cried, "the age of chivalry is not past. No knights of old ever did a more magnanimous deed!"

For four hours the battle raged, and then, baffled at all points, Morgan sullenly withdrew with a loss of nearly five hundred men. It was the most crushing defeat he had ever experienced, and was the beginning of the misfortunes which culminated in his complete overthrow a few months later.

In this battle Fred and his scouts performed the most valiant service, and received the thanks of Colonel Hall, and what pleased Fred better, the warmest commendation of General Thomas.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONWAY'S REVENGE.

THREE weeks after the battle at Milton, General David S. Stanley, in command of the Federal cavalry, concluded he was strong enough to attack Morgan in his stronghold at Snow Hill. The battle was short and conclusive. Morgan's men, disheartened by their defeat at Milton, fled at almost the first fire, breaking up into small detachments. Several of these detachments were overtaken by parties of the Federals, and a number of severe conflicts took place.

In one of these encounters Fred made a brilliant charge at the head of his scouts, putting to utter rout a company of Confederates, killing and capturing some twenty of them. Among the prisoners was Captain Mathews. He surrendered only when Fred had shot his horse and had him covered with his revolver.

"No use kicking, Captain," cried Fred. "I have the drop on you. Surrender!"

With a curse Mathews dropped his weapon, and growled, "You have me now, Shackelford, but I will have you some day."

"It looks as if it was my horse you wanted,

instead of me," replied Fred, "and you must have wanted him badly to send two thieves to steal him."

Mathews winced. "I will be riding that hoss of yours yet, when you are in ——," he blurted out.

"Be careful he doesn't throw you," answered Fred, sarcastically. "Prince wants some one astride of him who knows how to ride."

This touched Mathews in a tender spot, for he prided himself on his horsemanship.

"Look here, boy, Jim Mathews never lets himself be insulted with impunity," he said, white with rage. "I now wish Morgan had let Conway hang you. But mark my word, I will be even with you; see if I am not."

"Here, Smith," said Fred, turning to the old scout, "I place this gentleman in your care. He seems to be a little out of temper now."

"He had better keep a civil tongue in his head if I have charge of him," retorted Smith, threateningly.

Mathews looked at the old scout, considered discretion the better part of valor, and relapsed into a sullen silence.

"The captain feels ruther cut up," said one of Mathews's soldiers who had been captured with him. "Can't blame him much, seein' he's jest bin married."

"Married?" echoed Fred. "Captain Mathews just been married?"

"Yes, he and the Widder Beech spliced the other day."

"What! not the wife of Nathan Beech?" asked Fred, in surprise.

"Yes, Nathan Beech that war," responded the soldier.

"Why, man alive, Nathan Beech was alive and well not over two weeks ago."

"Deader than a herrin' now. Blown to pieces by a shell."

"Tell us about it," said Fred, and the men crowded around to hear the story.

"Well," replied the soldier, "it war jest this way: Nathan Beech war the blamedest little coward you ever see. His wife is a stunner. Hair as red as a turkey's gobble; but I tell you she is a looker. And grit! she has more in her little finger than Nathan had in his whole body. The captain took a shine to her the first time he ever seen her. One day—it war the day before the fight at Milton—blast my eyes! if Mrs. Beech didn't bring Nathan in camp and have him enlist. The little fellow shook so he couldn't sign his name, and we all cussed over having sech a coward in the company. But Captain Mathews he laughed, and said it war all right. The next day, when the first shell came shriekin' over us, Nathan jest give an awful yell, and, turnin' his hoss, went for the rear as if every Yank in creation war arter him. We had to laff to see him go. Would you believe it, the very next shell that was thrown went over our heads and took Nathan, kerplunk! Thar wasn't enough left of him

to make a decent corpse. A week afterwards the bereaved widder married the captain."

"I should think Mathews would rejoice that he has been captured," said Fred.

"Don't know about that," replied the soldier. "They seemed as happy as two kittens. She is a powerful handsome 'oman, and she is mighty proud of the captain."

On their return to Murfreesboro Fred turned over his prisoners. The next day they were placed on board the cars to be taken to Nashville, thence North. Fred happened to be at the depot as they were taking the train, and Captain Mathews, seeing him, said:

"Well, Shackelford, you are on top now, but it will be my turn next. Mark my word, I will ride that hoss of yours yet." And mockingly touching his hat, he took his place with the rest of the prisoners.

Fred thought the threat mere bravado, but he was startled a few hours later on hearing that Forrest had captured the train and liberated the prisoners. For the first time Fred felt a thrill of superstition. What if the tables should be turned, and he a prisoner in the hands of the infuriated captain? Such a thing might come about by the chances of war, but there was no use of borrowing trouble.

In all of his numerous encounters with Morgan Fred had never met or even seen Calhoun Pennington except that time during the battle of Milton. But

a few days after the escape of Captain Mathews, in one of his scouts he fell in with a detachment of Morgan's men, and he soon discovered that they were in command of Calhoun. Hoisting a white handkerchief, Fred rode forward and made himself known. A truce was at once declared, and the cousins met in friendly embrace, instead of deadly conflict.

Calhoun now wore the bars of a captain, and laughingly told Fred he could not crow over him any more.

"Do you know," said Calhoun, "that your old friend Conway is now a major? Morgan has little use for the fellow, but he was enabled to secure the promotion through some outside influence. I reckon I shall have to fight the fellow yet. He has taken a violent dislike to me, I suppose because I am your cousin. Mathews is also quite bitter against you; but he is not vindictive, though he swears by all the prophets he will yet have Prince."

The cousins had to talk fast, and they were just about to bid each other good-bye, when there came the sound of rapid firing from the direction in which Fred had left his command.

"What's that?" exclaimed Fred, as he wheeled his horse to gallop back. To his surprise more than a hundred Confederates were charging down on him, and at their head rode Major Conway and Captain Mathews. There was no escape; Fred was in a trap.

When Calhoun saw them he turned slightly pale,

but speaking hurriedly to Fred, he said: "Do not be alarmed. I will explain. It would be an outrage to hold you a prisoner."

No sooner did Conway see Fred than he cried: "Captain Shackelford, by all that's great! Luck is with me this time."

"And, Captain, you will oblige me by letting me have that hoss of mine," said Mathews, with mock politeness.

"Gentlemen," said Calhoun, with forced calmness, "you are laboring under a mistake. Captain Shackelford met me here under a flag of truce. As honorable soldiers we can do no more than let him return as free as he came."

"A very modest request," sneered Conway. "This traitor and spy escaped me once through your instrumentality. I will see that he does not again."

"Major Conway," replied Calhoun, trembling with passion, "this is an outrage. Captain Shackelford is under my protection, and if you have no honor, I have. I told you I met my cousin here under a flag of truce."

"Who gave you authority to meet Captain Shackelford under a flag of truce?" roared Conway. "Not only will I hold Shackelford a prisoner, but your own conduct shall be inquired into. It looks very much like treason."

Calhoun grew deadly pale, and reached for his revolver. Conway's life would have ended then and there if Fred had not grasped his cousin's arm.

"Don't, Calhoun," pleaded Fred, "don't imperil your standing or your life by defending me; it will do no good."

"Captain Mathews," exclaimed Conway, "arrest Captain Pennington. You all here are witnesses to the fact he has had treasonable communications with the prisoner here; and when charged with the crime attempted to kill me."

In a moment Calhoun was disarmed and placed under arrest.

"Captain Mathews," said Conway, "take a strong escort, and conduct Captain Pennington to division headquarters. Not to Morgan, remember."

"Why not to Morgan?" asked Calhoun.

"Because this is a case for higher authority than a brigade commander," answered Conway.

"It is because," retorted Calhoun, "you know Morgan will not believe your black lies, and you want to poison the minds of those higher in authority before he or I can get a hearing."

Conway's face became as black as a thundercloud. "If you were not a prisoner, I would call you to an account for that language," he exclaimed. "As it is, you are beneath my notice. Away with him, Mathews."

"First, Major," said Mathews, "let me change horses with Captain Shackelford. You know I promised myself that pleasure."

"All right, Captain; be quick about it."

Fred knew that it was of no use to protest. He was also stunned with the misfortune which had

overtaken Calhoun. Dismounting, he placed Prince's bridle in Mathews's hand, and controlling his feelings by a powerful effort, he said, "Captain, I ask nothing for myself, but be kind to the horse."

Mathews was touched. Like Fred, he loved a good horse. "Don't worry, Captain," he answered quietly. "I shall see the hoss has good treatment. Then I leave you a good mare in his place. Molly is all right, as you will find. And I will loan her to you to ride to McMinnville."

"Good-bye, old fellow, good-bye!" murmured Fred, as he patted Prince on the forehead; his heart was too full to say more.

The rough troopers were touched by this parting between master and horse. They could have seen Fred shot, and laughed over his death agony, but this affection between man and steed they understood. More than one of them had left a faithful horse to die, and gone on their ways, with wet eyes.

Fred watched Mathews as he rode away, and waved Calhoun a last adieu.

After the party was lost to view, Conway said to the senior officer of his command: "Captain, march the command back to McMinnville. I will detail six men and take the prisoner here to Tullahoma. I reckon General Bragg would like to interview him."

Thus saying, he chose six of the most villainous-looking soldiers in the whole command as the escort. After riding with the main body for about

a mile the major took a road which led directly toward Tullahoma. About two miles further on they came to a place where the wood came down to the road and a wide-spreading tree afforded a most delightful shade. Under this tree Major Conway halted, and ordered his men to dismount. Then for the first time he spoke to Fred.

"Do you know what I am going to do with you?" he asked, abruptly and with a scowling countenance.

"Going to take me to Tullahoma, as you said, I suppose," answered Fred.

"I am going to kill you," he replied with a fearful oath. Fred started. For a moment everything grew black before him, and he came nearly falling. Controlling himself by a powerful effort, he said: "Surely, Major Conway, you must be joking. To kill a prisoner in cold blood is simply murder. Honorable soldiers do not wage warfare that way."

"To kill a traitor and a spy is no crime," retorted Conway.

"You dare not kill me!" cried Fred. "The Confederate generals are not murderers. Morgan, Wheeler, Bragg, would bring you to a swift account."

A look of devilish triumph came into Conway's face as he answered: "Prisoners sometimes try to escape. You are going to try to escape, and will get shot for your trouble. Every man here will swear to it, won't you, boys?"

"Of course," replied the men, grinning from ear to ear. With them it was only a huge joke.

Fred saw it all—the damnable plot, the low cunning of Conway. He swallowed a great lump that arose in his throat; then he stood calm and collected. If die he must, the villain who stood gloating over him should not see him falter or tremble.

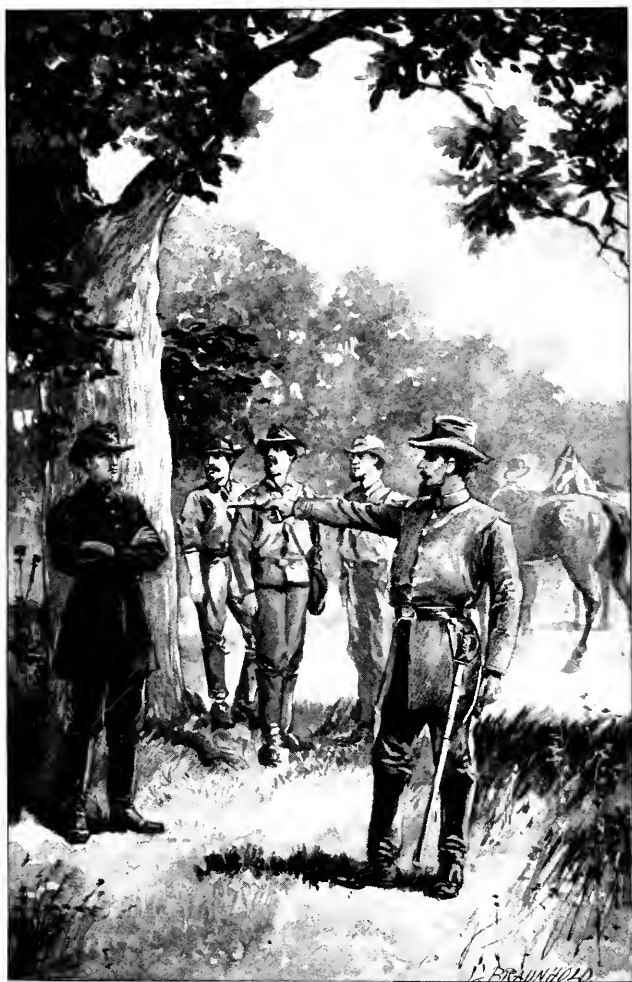
"Major Conway," said Fred, in a low, steady voice, "you are a disgrace to the uniform you wear. Brave, honorable men wear it, but you are a sneak, a coward, and a murderer."

"Bray ahead, my laddie," said Conway, chuckling, and taking out his watch. "You have just two minutes to live, and you had better say your prayers—though precious little good they will do you—instead of abusing me."

"To pray in sight of such a wretch as you would be sacrilege," answered Fred. "Two minutes of time is of little consequence to make one's peace with his Creator. It is by my whole life I shall be judged, and I trust in the mercy of a just God."

Never did the earth look more beautiful to Fred, never did life seem more sweet. The sun was shining brightly; the leaves of the trees, stirred by the zephyr, made low, soft music; from out of the wood came the notes of feathered songsters. One long, lingering look on earth and sky, and then calmly folding his arms, Fred said, "*I am ready.*"

Conway raised his revolver; there was no pity in his relentless eyes. Like a chiseled piece of statuary Fred stood. Even the rough, hardened



Calmly folding his Arms, Fred said, "I am ready."



wretches looking on uttered exclamations of admiration.

Suddenly there came the sharp crack of carbines. Major Conway gave a bound in the air, a curse died away on his lips, and he fell a limp, lifeless clod of earth.

At the same time two of the soldiers sank moaning to the earth. Again the carbines rang out, and three more of the soldiers fell.

There was a cheer, and Smith, Darling, and Hugh came bounding on the scene. The only Confederate left unharmed fell on his knees and begged for mercy, but in the excitement he was not noticed.

"Saved!" whispered Smith, and he threw his arms around Fred, while great tears rolled down his weather-beaten cheeks.

"Saved!" cried Darling, and the great-hearted fellow seized Fred's hand and nearly wrung it off.

"Saved!" shouted Hugh, and he threw his hat in the air, and commenced turning somersaults, a way he had when he was excessively pleased. He brought up face to face with the surviving Confederate.

"Hello!" he exclaimed, "who have we here? Why haven't you joined your comrades?" And he drew his revolver.

"Mercy! mercy!" gasped the fellow.

"And yet you would have murdered the captain here in cold blood!" thundered Hugh.

"It wasn't me; it was the major," he blubbered.

"Hugh," said Fred sternly, "you would not shoot a prisoner?"

"No, Captain; but I would like to scare the life out of him, the murdering villain. What shall I do with him?"

Fred looked at the fallen Confederates. Two of them were not dead. "Let him stay and care for his wounded comrades," he said. "We must get away as soon as possible. Here, fellow, if we let you go, you will tell Morgan just how this happened?"

"Yes, yes—everything."

"Then let us be going, for I hear the trampling of horses' feet," continued Fred. "The firing must have attracted the attention of some roving band of the enemy."

"I see them!" shouted Smith. "Quick, Captain; mount one of the horses and follow us."

Jumping onto the horse he had ridden, Fred followed the three scouts, who had plunged into the woods and were running at the top of their speed. A race of two hundred yards brought them to where their horses were hitched. In a trice they were mounted, and all four were away; but as they rode there were borne to their ears the cries of horror which the Confederates uttered when they discovered the bodies of their slain comrades.

A swift ride of a couple of miles took Fred and his companions out of danger. They now took the main road, and had not gone far when they met a regiment of Federal cavalry galloping to the front.

The news of Fred's capture had been brought back by the excited scouts who had escaped. The colonel commanding the regiment had ordered a swift pursuit, hoping to effect a rescue.

When Fred and his companions were discovered, the column halted, and three cheers were given. The story of the fight and Fred's almost miraculous escape from death was told, and then the enthusiasm of the soldiers knew no bounds. They crowded around Smith, Darling, and Hugh, and nearly shook their hands off, and would have carried them on their shoulders if permitted.

When Murfreesboro was reached, and supper eaten, Fred said, "Now, boys, tell me how you came to rescue me."

"Thar is not much to tell," replied Smith. "What thar is, let Dick tell."

"As Smith says," answered Darling, "the story is not a long one. When you rode forward to meet your cousin of course we expected no attack, and so were kind of careless. But Hugh, there, you know, is always gaping around to see what he can discover. We were suddenly startled by hearing Hugh yell, 'Thunder! there come the Rebs!' Looking up we saw, not three hundred yards away, at least two hundred Rebs charging down on us. They were in between us and you, and the only thing for us to do was to cut and run. They fired on us, but did us no particular damage. One or two of the men were scratched, I think. They did not follow us far, and we halted to hold a council

of war. To say we were mad over your capture puts it mildly; we were wild. I never saw Smith so excited. He struck his carbine on the ground so hard that he broke it, and shouted, 'It's all a damnable plot on the part of that cousin of his.' "

"No, no," broke in Fred, "that is a mistake. Calhoun would sooner die than be a party to such treachery. He is now under arrest, and in danger of being court-martialed for trying to protect me. It was all the work of Conway."

"I am glad to hear that," answered Darling, "for every man of us swore eternal vengeance against young Pennington. After consultation it was decided that Smith, Hugh, and myself should follow the Rebels up, and try and keep track of you, while the others should go back for help. Fortunately the cleared fields did not extend more than three hundred yards back from the road, and by riding rapidly through the woods we soon came in sight of the party that captured you. When we saw the party separate, and that Major Conway with an escort of only six men turned off with you into a crossroad, we fairly shouted for joy. Putting spurs to our horses, we dashed through the woods at breakneck speed in order to get ahead of the major and his party. After riding about two miles, we came to a place where the woods came down to the road, and at once planned an ambuscade. Leaving our horses back in the woods, we crept close to the side of the road and awaited the coming of Conway. We did not have long to wait,

but to our surprise Conway halted just before he reached us, and you all dismounted. We soon saw something unusual was going on; so we crept back, and got within about fifty yards of you undiscovered. Then, to our horror, we saw that Conway was going to murder you. We had no time to lose; each of us selected a man, Smith taking Conway, for he is the best shot. Just as Conway was raising his revolver to shoot you, we fired. You know the rest."

"I know," said Fred, with the glad tears standing in his eyes, "that you saved my life, and I can never repay you."

"'No more of that, Hal, an thou lovest us,' " exclaimed Hugh, in a theatrical tone. Hugh had become the possessor of a dilapidated copy of Shakespeare, and had put in his spare hours around camp reading it, and he was very fond of quoting the great dramatist.

"You will have to get more girth, Hugh, before you can personate Falstaff," laughed Fred; but the incident served to dispel the somber clouds, and soon it was forgotten how near to death one of their number had been.

But there was one thing Fred could not forget—Prince was gone. It was a terrible blow to him. That night he could not sleep. Once in a while, he would start up trembling with excitement, thinking he heard the well-known whinny. Then the fact that Prince was gone would force itself upon him, and the burning tears would course

down his cheeks. Who is there that will call him weak?

Two days afterwards there came a great surprise. A courier from General W. B. Hazen, who commanded the Federal outpost at Readyville, came riding up to General Thomas's headquarters, leading a splendid horse. Dismounting, he inquired for Captain Fred Shackelford. Fred was summoned, and when he saw the horse he stopped as if turned to stone. Then he shouted, "Prince! Prince!" and in a moment his arms were around the horse's neck, and he was talking to him as a lover would talk to his beloved. As for Prince, he fairly trembled with excitement, and fondled his master like a dog.

The surprise over, Fred thanked the courier, and asked him how he had secured the horse. For answer the man handed Fred a letter. He opened it, and to his astonishment read:

MCMINNVILLE, TENN., May 5, 1863.

CAPTAIN FRED SHACKELFORD, FEDERAL ARMY.

My Dear Captain: I have heard from Captain Pennington the story of your unlawful capture. No officer of mine ever shall, by my consent, violate his word of honor, or cause another officer to do so.

I have also heard from the lips of the soldier whose life and liberty you spared of Major Conway's treachery, and how he would have murdered you in cold blood. I blush that I had such an officer in my command. He deserved the fate he met. It may please you to learn that your cousin, Captain Pennington, has been released from arrest, and commended for his honorable conduct.

I have great pleasure in returning to you your horse. He is a noble steed, worthy of his gallant owner. If you can see

your way clear, although you are under no obligations to do so, to return Captain Mathews's mare, the act will be greatly appreciated, as the captain feels considerably cut up, in being obliged to return your horse.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN H. MORGAN,

Brigadier-General, C. S. A.

"Hurrah for Morgan!" shouted Hugh, who had joined the crowd around the horse and listened to the reading of the letter, and in his joy he turned no less than six somersaults.

"I forgive him for cutting our cracker line so often," laughed Dick Darling.

"I would forgive him half the crimes in the decalogue," said Fred.

It is needless to say that when the courier returned to Readyville he took Captain Mathews's horse with him, and not only that, but a warm letter of thanks to General John H. Morgan.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CAPTURE OF CHATTANOOGA.

THE recovery of Prince was one of the most pleasing of Fred's army experiences. It also gave him a new insight into the character of the great raider. It showed that Morgan was as chivalrous as he was daring. Henceforth Morgan had no warmer friend than Fred.

Army affairs being a little quiet, Fred asked and received permission for himself and Hugh to visit Nashville. It was some time since he had heard from his aunt, and he was very anxious to learn how Kate was getting along.

He received a warm welcome, both from his aunt and Kate; but he noticed with pain that Kate was not the merry, light-hearted girl that she had been. The death of her brother and her lover, and the terrible experience through which she herself had passed, had made her a woman. Her whole heart was bound up in the cause of the South, and every evening she would turn her face toward the Capitol and shake her little fist at the flag floating from the dome, with the words "One day less to float." Yet her extreme bitterness toward the North was not so pronounced as it had been. Hugh she toler-

ated, because he had saved Fred's life, and the two became great friends.

Fred learned from his aunt that but a few days before she had heard in an indirect way from her husband, as well as from General Shackelford.

Both were well, and both full of hope that the cause of the South would yet triumph.

Fred and Hugh stayed a week at the hospitable home of Mrs. Shackelford, and Fred noticed that Kate had become much livelier and more like her old self. The company of the light-hearted, merry Hugh was well calculated to arouse her from her despondency.

The day before Fred must return, he asked Kate if she knew anything of Captain Ainsworth.

Kate colored, and replied that she had not heard of him since that eventful day before the court-martial.

"Let me tell you of him," said Fred. "Captain Ainsworth is here in the hospital. He was wounded near unto death at the battle of Stone River, and for weeks his life was despaired of, but he is now convalescent."

"I did him a great wrong," said Kate, in a low, trembling voice, "and to partly right it I perjured my soul."

"No, no, Kate; that lie will be forgiven. It was one of the noblest acts of your life, for I well know the heart agony it has caused you. Kate, let me tell you more of Ainsworth. He is really a grand fellow, and comes of a fine family. No doubt he

loved you to distraction, for which I don't blame him, for, cousin mine, you are very beautiful."

"There, there, Mr. Fred, no flattery. You ought to be ashamed of yourself;" but she ended her protest by kissing him.

"The knowledge of your deceit nearly killed him," continued Fred, "but full as keen was the knowledge that he had been so weak as to forget his duty as a soldier. That you considered his honor or his life worth saving was to him a matter of surprise. When the Stone River campaign began he arose from his sick-bed and insisted on accompanying his regiment, against the earnest protests of the surgeon.

" 'It will kill you,' said the surgeon.

" 'So much the better,' answered Ainsworth.

"During the battle, his men tell me, he acted as a man determined to die. He refused all shelter, and was among the foremost in the fiercest charges. It is said he saved the regiment at a critical time. A major's commission awaits him when he returns to his regiment."

"Fred," said Kate, looking her cousin full in the face, "why do you tell me all this? If Captain Ainsworth still cherishes any affection for me, I am sincerely sorry. How can he after what has happened? I know I-wronged him deeply, and I want you to take me to him to ask his forgiveness. This done, I never want to see him again. My heart lies buried in the grave with Louis Garrard. Even if

this were not so, I would rather die than marry an enemy of my country, and I would rather suffer ten thousand deaths than marry Philip Ainsworth. But I can and should ask his forgiveness."

"Kate," said Fred, "you are not only a heroine, but what is better, a Christian. I will gladly go with you to the hospital. There is a young lady there, a nurse, I should like to have you meet. You may have heard me speak of her—Miss Mabel Vaughn, the one I rescued from the mob at Louisville."

Kate's lip curled in scorn. "Thank you," she replied coldly, "I do not think my Christianity makes it incumbent on me to become acquainted with Yankee nurse girls."

Fred flushed. "Mabel Vaughn," said he, "is neither a nurse girl in the way that you mean, nor is she a Yankee. She is a native Kentuckian, fully your equal in birth, and far more than your equal in wealth. She is in the hospital because she loves the cause of the North fully as much as you love the cause of the South. Like you, Kate, she is in mourning; her betrothed fell at Shiloh."

Kate's eyes softened. "I will see her," she said simply.

So they went together to the hospital. Captain Ainsworth's eyes opened wide with astonishment when he saw Kate; but when she gave him her little hand, and asked his forgiveness, he broke down completely. Fred withdrew, and what passed be-

tween them he never knew; but Kate afterwards told him a great burden had been rolled from her heart.

Mabel Vaughn coming into the ward, Fred introduced her to Kate.

"A relative of Fred," said Mabel, with one of her sweet smiles, "will always find a warm place in my heart. You know Fred is my adopted brother."

When the two girls parted it was with a warm invitation from Kate for Mabel to visit her.

"Oh, Fred," said Kate, as they were on their way home, "how can you call me beautiful, after seeing her? But, Fred, you are a fool; boys are fools about some things. My vanity has also received a severe shock."

"Why, how is that, Kate? I don't understand."

"Captain Ainsworth is not eating his heart out for love of me. He is in love with Mabel Vaughn. Oh! you boys are blind. Did you not see his eyes follow her wherever she went?"

"You surprise me," exclaimed Fred. "If what you say is true, I am sorry."

"Sorry, Fred? Surely you—why you are nothing but a boy."

Fred broke into a merry laugh. "Just what she said, Kate, and it cured my boyish fancy. Then you know she was the affianced of another when I first knew her. But it beats all, coz, what assurance you girls have. I am as old as you are. I said I was sorry, because I am afraid Ainsworth is again

doomed to disappointment. Mabel's grief is too fresh to be so soon forgotten."

"Mabel is young," answered Kate. "It is not natural for one to grieve always."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Kate. If one truly loves, he cannot wish the being he loves to go through a long life forever grieving. Kate, you are too young, of too joyous a nature, to grieve forever. I trust there is yet a happy future before you."

Kate looked at him with swimming eyes. "Don't, don't," she whispered. "I can never, never be happy again."

A short time afterwards Fred heard her merry laugh ring out at some witticism of Hugh's. He smiled, and said to himself, "Kate will forget one of these days; but Mabel—" He thought it would be different with Mabel.

On their way back to Murfreesboro, Hugh suddenly broke out with: "I say, Fred, that cousin of yours is a stunner. She is the prettiest girl I ever saw. But, my! what a little Rebel she is! Fred, she told me that she never saw a Yankee but that she despised him. And she actually told me that if I didn't go home and mind my business she hoped I would get killed." And Hugh fetched a deep sigh.

"Why that sigh, my lord?" asked Fred, solemnly.

"I—I—wish she thought more of Yankees," innocently replied Hugh.

Fred laughed heartily. "Better let that fire-

brand alone, my boy, or you may get your fingers burned."

Again Hugh sighed, but did not answer.

For the next month Fred's life was very quiet. The Confederates kept well within their lines, and there were but few skirmishes between the scouting parties of the two armies. Grant was thundering at the gates of Vicksburg, and Rosecrans was urged to make a forward movement in order to prevent reinforcements being sent to General Joseph E. Johnston, who was gathering an army to attack Grant in the rear. But Rosecrans refused, believing it the part of wisdom to hold Bragg where he was.

So May and the most of June slipped by. At length, on the 23d of June, Rosecrans advanced to attack Bragg in his stronghold at Tullahoma. He had waited for weeks for dry weather, but the very day he started it commenced raining, and for two weeks the floodgates of heaven were opened, and the rain descended in a perfect deluge. The roads became quagmires, but the army struggled on through mud and water. At one place Fred saw a hundred men, in mud up to their knees, tugging on a rope, hauling a piece of artillery up a hill. Thus all the artillery and wagons of a great army corps were dragged by human muscle.

The movement on Tullahoma by Rosecrans was, from a military standpoint, a masterly one, and to his surprise Bragg found his left flank turned and his communications in danger. He saved himself only by a precipitate retreat, and the stronghold of

Tullahoma fell, almost without a struggle. Only the mud and water saved Bragg from a most disastrous defeat.

The middle of July found the whole of Bragg's army across the Tennessee River, with headquarters at Chattanooga. The two armies now occupied the same relative positions that they did the summer before. It had taken the Federal armies just a year to recover the ground lost in the Bragg-Buell campaign. After the fall of Tullahoma Rosecrans waited for six weeks before he commenced his campaign for the possession of Chattanooga.

It was during this interim that General John H. Morgan made his famous raid into Indiana and Ohio. The most intense excitement was caused by this raid. The panic-stricken people did not recover from their fright until Morgan was captured.

Fred read the account of this raid with the greatest interest, and eagerly scanned the lists of the killed and captured for the name of his cousin. To his relief it was in neither list, and Fred was hopeful that Calhoun had escaped. Yet so eager was he to find out the truth that he obtained a short leave of absence and went to see Morgan and his officers, who had been confined in the Ohio State prison at Columbus.

General Morgan met Fred as cordially as if in his own parlor, instead of a prison cell. When asked about Calhoun, he said:

"Captain Pennington was one of my best and bravest officers. His only fault was rashness. It

is a wonder he was not killed long ago. The last known of him was that he, with his company, attempted to cut their way through a body of Federal cavalry which had surrounded them. His company were all killed or captured, but he succeeded in breaking through, though he was seen to reel in his saddle, and it was thought he was desperately wounded. From that day to this he has not been seen or heard from. I fear he fell from his horse in some out-of-the-way place and died."

Fred was deeply moved over what Morgan told him.

"You and your cousin seemed to think a great deal of each other," said Morgan.

"We were like brothers," answered Fred, "and we did not let the feelings engendered by the war come between us. We respected each other's opinion, knowing that both were equally honest."

"In that you showed more sense than a great many," replied Morgan.

Before he left, Fred thanked Morgan for returning his horse, and said: "General, it pains me to see you confined here like a felon, instead of being treated like a prisoner of war. It's a shame. The Government never captured a braver or more gallant foe, and it should treat you as a soldier."

For a moment Morgan's eyes flamed, and then he quietly answered: "I thank you, Captain, for what you have said. The way the Federal authorities treat me shows how much they fear me."

Fred returned with a heavy heart, yet he hoped

that in some way Calhoun had managed to escape. General Rosecrans had already begun his forward movement when Fred joined his command. The campaign was managed with the same skill that the Tullahoma campaign had been. In fact, the campaign that gave Rosecrans Chattanooga stands out as one of the greatest pieces of strategy of the war. In conception it was worthy of Napoleon. The obstacles to be overcome were great. Rivers had to be crossed, mountain ranges scaled, but Rosecrans overcame every obstacle.

He led Bragg to believe he would cross the mountains into East Tennessee, and try to gain Chattanooga by turning his right flank. But instead, his troops crossed the Tennessee River below Chattanooga, near Bridgeport, and before Bragg knew it the Federals had Lookout Mountain in their possession, and the left flank of the Confederate army was completely turned. The result was that Chattanooga was evacuated, and the prize for which the Federal armies had so long contended was theirs.

But now it was Rosecrans's time to be outgeneraled. Vicksburg had fallen, the battle of Gettysburg had been fought and won, and the armies both in Virginia and Mississippi were comparatively idle. The Confederate government resolved to concentrate before Chattanooga and crush Rosecrans. To this end Longstreet was hurried from Virginia with his corps, and fifteen thousand men were brought from Mississippi. When Chattanooga was evacuated the

wily Bragg gave out that he was in full retreat for Rome.

Numerous deserters came into the Union lines, and all told the same story—that Bragg's army was totally demoralized and in headlong retreat.

Elated by his success, Rosecrans ordered a swift pursuit. McCook was to press forward and occupy Alpine and Summerville; Thomas was to advance at once and capture Lafayette, while Crittenden was to seize Ringgold and then march on Dalton or Lafayette, as circumstances demanded.

The tenth of September found Rosecrans's army extended over a front of nearly fifty miles. The corps were widely separated and not within supporting distance of each other. Bragg lay with his army massed near Lafayette. He could attack and defeat the Federal army in detail. That is what he intended to do. It seemed as if only a miracle could save the Federal army from annihilation.

And all the time Rosecrans, not dreaming of his danger, kept sending orders to his generals to hurry up, or Bragg would escape.

CHAPTER XX.

TREED IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP.

THOMAS'S corps held the center of the Federal army. They had climbed the rugged side of Lookout, and from its lofty summit they saw the country spread out like a map. Before them lay valleys, mountain ranges, and thick woods. In these woods, and behind these mountains, half a million men could be concealed, and Thomas be none the wiser. Away to the east, toward Lafayette, clouds of dust could be seen rising, as if a great army were on the move. Thomas had received word from Rosecrans that Bragg was retreating, and that he must occupy Lafayette at the earliest possible moment.

Negley's division had already moved down the mountain, across the valley, and the roar of his guns could be heard in front of Dug Gap in the Pigeon range.

Fred had just come back from the front, and reported to Thomas that Negley was meeting with stubborn resistance, and that he was satisfied there was a large force in his front.

The general listened to Fred's report, and then said: "I have already ordered Baird's division to the support of Negley."

Then with his glass Thomas surveyed the country in front long and carefully. At last he closed his glass with a sigh. "I am afraid," he said, "there are more men behind that mountain range than we are aware of."

"That is what I have been thinking," replied Fred.

Just then two deserters were brought to Thomas. They were sharp-looking fellows, and answered all questions readily. They told the same story that all the deserters had been telling, that Bragg's army was totally demoralized and in full retreat for Rome.

"What do you think, Captain?" asked Thomas of Fred, after all the information possible had been gained from them and they had been sent away.

"I think they are lying," promptly answered Fred. "Have you not noticed, General, that all the deserters who come into our lines tell exactly the same story, as if they had been coached?"

"I have," answered Thomas. "My impression is that they are sent in on purpose to deceive. Instead of being retreating, Bragg's whole army may be before us. But what can I do? I have positive orders to occupy Lafayette at once. If I obey, I am afraid I go to my destruction. But it is no light thing to disobey the orders of a commanding general, especially when I have no positive proof that there is a large force in my front."

"General," answered Fred, "you shall have proof if it is possible for human agency to get it.

I shall go on a scout to-night, and hope to bring you information by to-morrow."

"Very well, Captain; but do not be too rash. Remember that much depends on your success."

"I shall not forget it, General."

Hastily calling Smith, Darling, and Hugh, Fred explained to them what he was expected to do. Each one was eager for the adventure.

"Smith," said Fred, "for this one time, I must insist that you put on a soldier's uniform. If we are captured, it must be, if possible, as scouts, not as spies."

After a little grumbling Smith procured a uniform and donned it.

"Quite a respectable-looking soldier," laughed Darling, as he surveyed the old scout in his regimentals. "Now don't forget what company and regiment you belong to."

It was nearly dark when they reached Negley's line. A sharp skirmish was in progress in front, and they found the general anxious and full of grave apprehensions.

"I cannot move them a foot," he said. "How I wish I knew what is behind that mountain!"

"That is what I am here for," said Fred. "I am going to try to find out to-night, if possible."

Fred then unfolded his plans to Negley and to his adjutant-general, Captain James A. Lowrie, who listened attentively.

"The plan may work, Captain," replied the general, "but you are taking your life in your hands."

"That is what all soldiers do," answered Fred. "General, will you send a detail of cavalry with us for a short distance? I wish to send back our horses with them."

The request was readily granted. As they rode away, Negley wrung Fred's hand and exclaimed, with emotion: "God grant, Captain, that I may see you again."

Going to the rear for some distance, Fred turned to the north and rode rapidly for about three miles. Here he came to a place where a spur of the Pigeon range encroached upon the valley, making it quite narrow. Dismounting, Fred said to the non-commissioned officer in charge of the cavalry: "Sergeant, you can take our horses and get back as soon as possible. What we do now must be done on foot."

As they rode away, Fred heard the sergeant say to one of his comrades: "Blamed fools! All four of them will get their necks stretched."

"Not a cheerful parting," said Fred, with a smile.

Smith shrugged his shoulders, while Darling and Hugh made light of it; yet all four fully realized the desperate nature of their enterprise. Fred laid before his companions the full details of his plans.

"A little to the north of us," said he, "is Catlett's Gap. No doubt it is as heavily guarded by the enemy as Dug Gap is. I have carefully examined the mountain before us through my glass, and it is exceedingly steep and rugged. I doubt if it is

guarded at all. We shall find pickets on the road that runs along the base a short distance in our front. If we can run these pickets successfully, I believe we can gain the top of the mountain undetected, and learn if there is a heavy force on the other side."

"I reckon the plan is all right," said Smith. "Captain, I am kinder used to this work. Let me take the lead, an' I will crawl right under the nose of them pickets, an' they will be none the wiser."

Cautiously making their way through the wood, they approached the road that ran along the base of the mountains. Through the shadows of night which had now begun to gather they saw that the road was heavily picketed by Confederate cavalry.

"We must wait," whispered Smith, "until dark. An' then we will try and creep through."

Soon everything was shrouded in the mantle of night. Wood, plain, and mountain were blotted out. "Now," said Smith, "follow me as silently as ghosts."

It was wonderful how noiselessly the old scout glided through the forest. Do the best they could, Fred and Hugh would make some noise. Soon the road was reached. The Confederate pickets could be heard talking. Throwing themselves on the ground, they wormed themselves across the road like huge reptiles. Just as they were across, a cavalry officer came riding along. The horse shied and nearly threw its rider. The officer cursed and

rode on. "That horse is wiser than his rider," thought Fred.

When beyond the hearing of the pickets they arose to their feet and began to ascend the mountain. It was a terrible undertaking in the thick darkness, for they had to feel their way. Slowly they toiled onward and upward, getting many a fall and bruise. It was nearly eleven o'clock when the summit of the mountain was reached, and the mystery that was behind it lay unfolded before them.

To the east, north, and south, innumerable camp-fires blazed. A mighty host was before them. The night was still, and away to the left were heard the sound of chopping, the rumbling of artillery and the confused murmur of many voices.

"They are removing the obstructions from Catlett's Gap," whispered Fred, "and are preparing to flank Negley. He and Thomas must be warned at once. Smith, you and Darling must go back immediately. I send both, for fear one may be captured. Negley's only hope is to fall back at once. Go! go as quick as you can, and if you scent danger, do not keep together; you will stand a better chance of getting through."

"What are you goin' to do, Captain?" whispered Smith.

"Hugh and I must stay and see if we can find out more," answered Fred.

Both Smith and Darling demurred to leaving them, but they were told that everything depended on their getting back. So with a whispered good-

bye and a warm pressure of the hand they disappeared in the darkness. Fred and Hugh were alone—alone in the midst of enemies.

“What next, Captain?” asked Hugh, a little shaky in the voice. The silence and unknown danger which they were facing told on Hugh. He was more at home amid the fierce excitement of battle.

“I shall descend the mountain, and try to find out more of the designs and strength of the enemy.”

“All right, Captain; anything is better than lying still in this awful silence.”

Cautiously they made their way down the eastern slope of the mountain, without any serious mishap, although they both had several severe falls. Once down the mountain, they came to a cleared field, then to a road, by the side of which stood a tree with very thick foliage. The night, which had been somewhat cloudy, now became clear, and the stars shone out, so that objects could be discerned at quite a distance.

Suddenly there came the sound of the heavy tramp of soldiers, the sharp command of officers. The Confederate army was moving.

“Quick, Hugh, up the tree!” whispered Fred, and the two boys were soon ensconced among the branches.

A general officer rode his horse under the tree, and halted.

“A good place to camp,” he remarked to an aide by his side; “give the necessary order.”

Other officers rode up, and Fred learned that the

general was none other than D. H. Hill, one of Bragg's corps commanders. The column was halted, and presently the night glowed with innumerable camp-fires.

General Hill was joined by General Hindman, and, to the consternation of the boys, they made their headquarters under the tree. The scouts were treed in the camp of the enemy.

Placing his mouth close to Hugh's ear, Fred whispered: "We are in for it; the slightest noise will betray us."

In a short time several other officers rode up, and Fred nearly dropped from his perch when he recognized the voice of his father. General Buckner was also one of the party. The boys now became aware that they were to listen to a council of war.

Bragg's orders were that Negley was to be crushed that day; but Dug and Catlett's gaps had been so obstructed that the Confederate troops could not get through in time. Hindman also found fault with his orders, and wanted them modified. Cleburne, who was to have moved through Dug Gap, was sick, and his troops were slow. The generals present were afraid they might feel the weight of Bragg's wrath, and there was a great diversity of opinion.

"Negley," said Hill, "should have been crushed to-day. He may take fright and draw back."

"I found it impossible to remove the obstructions so as to get my artillery through," replied Hindman. "Bragg should not ask the impossible."

Neither did Cleburne come up to support me, as promised."

"How many men, now that Buckner's corps is here, can we bring against Thomas in the morning?" asked Fred's father.

"At least thirty thousand," was the answer. "Oh, we have Thomas."

"Not if he takes fright," replied General Shackelford, "and draws Negley back to Lookout Mountain, covering Stevens's and Cooper's gaps. The position is a strong one, and I doubt if our thirty thousand men could take him out of it. He has four divisions."

"Oh," answered Hill, "Negley will not withdraw. The Yanks are completely fooled; they think we are in full retreat."

"Thomas is as usual evidently showing a great deal of caution," answered General Shackelford. "I doubt if we can fool him."

Hill now spoke to Buckner, and asked if he knew when Longstreet would arrive.

"In about a week," was the answer, "and he will bring twenty thousand of the flower of Lee's army with him."

Fred fairly gasped for breath. Longstreet coming with twenty thousand men! The Army of the Cumberland was indeed in peril.

"We have already received about fifteen thousand reinforcements from Mississippi," continued Buckner. "When Longstreet gets here we shall be able to eat the Yankees up."

"We ought to have Rosecrans's army annihilated before Longstreet gets here," answered General Shackelford, with considerable feeling. "Nothing but stupidity on our part can prevent it. Rosecrans's army is divided into three nearly equal parts, and these parts are separated from each other by distances of over twenty miles. It is impossible for his corps to reinforce each other. They can and should be crushed in detail. Gentlemen, I believe the fate of the Confederacy will be decided in the next few days. With Rosecrans's army gone, and ours reinforced by Longstreet, there is nothing to prevent us sweeping forward to the Ohio River."

Here there was an interruption occasioned by an aide from General Bragg galloping up. "Gentlemen," he exclaimed, "General Bragg is greatly disappointed over the fact that Negley was not crushed to-day. He refuses to modify his orders in any respect, and will brook no delay. He will be here in the morning to direct the movement personally."

Fred listened to this conversation with an anxious heart. His own perilous situation was forgotten in the thought of the danger which threatened Thomas. Would Smith or Darling be able to get through the enemy's lines in time to warn Negley? The thought that they might fail was agony. So wrought up did he become that he was on the point of descending the tree and trying to run the gauntlet of the enemy's camp, when his better judgment

prevailed. To make such an attempt would be suicidal.

The night was chilly, and the boys shivered with the cold, while their cramped limbs ached as if they would come off. But as the rebel camp sank to rest they were enabled to move slightly, and so relieve the strain. Then they took turns resting in each other's arms, and thus each was enabled to get a little sleep, while the other watched.

At length morning came, and with it Bragg. He had given orders for Hindman's division to move through Catlett's Gap and attack at six o'clock. But the morning slipped away, and Bragg waited impatiently for the sound of Hindman's guns, which was to be the signal for Cleburne to advance. Not hearing any sound of battle, he sent order after order to Hindman to hurry, but it was noon before his cannon were heard, and the sound was far in advance of where Bragg expected it.

At the first sound of battle Cleburne advanced, but to Fred's and Hugh's despair the headquarters were not moved, and they saw no chance of escape.

"Great Scott! Captain," whispered Hugh, "must we stay here all day?"

"It looks like it," Fred whispered back.

"I shall tumble off, I know I shall," replied Hugh, with a stifled groan.

It was some time before they heard Cleburne's guns, and then the sound of fighting was so far away Fred knew that Negley must have fallen back. He breathed a sigh of relief.

Let us now return to Negley. A little after daylight rapid firing broke out on the Confederate picket line, and a soldier was seen running toward the Federal outposts. Once he fell, but he was up again, though it was noticed that he did not run as fast as before. The Federal pickets rushed forward, drove the Confederates back, and soon the fugitive was safe in the Union lines.

It was Darling. He was hatless, his clothing was torn to shreds, and he was bleeding from three wounds.

"Take me to General Negley!" he gasped.

The brave fellow kept up long enough to tell the general his story, and then fell fainting. Negley saw his danger, and in connection with General Baird a most masterly retreat was made, and before night the two divisions were safe at the foot of Lookout. Here they were joined by the other two divisions of the corps, and in the strong position chosen General Thomas could bid defiance to the whole Confederate army.

The rage of Bragg when he saw that his expected prey had escaped was terrible. Fred, miserable as he was, saw with exultation the Confederates come marching back, and rejoiced when he heard their expressions of baffled rage. It was long after dark before the headquarters were moved and all the army had passed by. From expressions dropped by the different officers, Fred learned that quite a large force had been left in front of Thomas, and knew he would have hard work to get through the lines.

Fortunately for the boys, they had their haversacks and canteens with them, and thus had not suffered from hunger or thirst during their enforced stay in the tree. At last they deemed the coast clear enough to descend with safety. They had been in the tree for nearly twenty-four hours.

To their surprise, their limbs refused to carry them. A brisk rubbing soon enabled them to walk, but they reeled and staggered like drunken men. It was some time before the blood circulated freely and they could walk with their accustomed vigor. Slowly and painfully the boys made their way back over the mountain, and at last reached the valley. Now commenced their real danger. The smoldering camp-fires showed there was a large force between them and Thomas.

"There is no other way," whispered Fred to Hugh, "we must pass through. Fortunately they cannot see the color of our uniforms in the darkness."

Creeping, crawling, and many times walking boldly along, after half a dozen hairbreadth escapes, they worked their way through the camp.

"Now," said Fred, "if we can only get past the pickets we are all right. That will be the hardest job."

Cautiously making their way along, stopping to listen every few steps, they were fortunate enough to get close enough to the picket line to hear when the sentinels were changed.

"Now, Hugh," whispered Fred, "keep close

behind me. It makes no difference what happens, don't speak. If the worst comes, make a break for the Union lines."

Creeping along on their hands and knees, Fred in advance, they slowly made their way along. In this way they advanced some distance, and Fred began to hope they had passed through the line, when his quick ear caught the sound of footsteps. He listened intently. The pacing of a sentinel to and fro on his beat could be distinctly heard.

Fred turned, thinking that by passing a little to one side they might miss the sentinel. As he was feeling his way along, for it was in the woods and pitch dark, he placed his hand on the body of a sleeping soldier. He drew back his hand, shuddering as if he had touched a poisonous reptile. The soldier muttered something about it not being time for him to go on guard, turned over, and went to sleep. They had come on the sleeping reserve pickets.

Stealthily making their way around the sleeping men, they again attempted to pass through the line.

Unfortunately Hugh placed his knee on a dry twig, and it snapped.

"Who comes there?"

The challenge came quick and sharp, and only a few paces in advance. Fred knew at once they would have to fight for it.

"The officer of the guard," he answered clearly, rising to his feet.



"Who comes there?"

"Advance, officer of the guard, and give the countersign."

Fred advanced boldly until his breast almost touched the bayonet of the sentinel's gun. Then there was a flash, a report, and the soldier, with a sharp cry of agony, dropped his gun. As quick as thought Fred hurled himself on him and struck him reeling to the earth.

"Come!" he shouted to Hugh, as he dashed through the woods.

Along the Confederate picket line all was confusion. They opened fire, and the balls cut the limbs and twigs around the boys, but fortunately neither was hit. Back in camp they could hear the long roll beating, and all the noise and uproar which follows a night alarm.

"I think we are out of danger now," panted Fred, as he brought up against a tree, nearly knocking his brains out.

"I am a mass of bruises," groaned Hugh. "My face is scratched up, and one eye nearly gouged out."

"Be thankful it is no worse. As for me, I am sorry I had to shoot that sentinel. I hope I didn't kill him."

"Don't mourn over that now, Captain; let us get into the Union lines, or the Johnnies will have us yet."

Just as day was breaking they entered the Union lines. General Thomas received them as from the dead. Fred briefly and succinctly told the general

all he had learned. Thomas, without a word of reply, rapidly wrote a letter to Rosecrans. Sending for one of his most trustworthy couriers, he said: "Take this to General Rosecrans at Chattanooga. Here is an order to seize any horse that you may want, even if it belongs to a general of division. Don't spare horseflesh; kill a dozen horses, if need be. Ride! ride for your life!"

In less than a minute the courier was riding furiously toward Chattanooga, and as he rode he muttered: "Something's up. I never knew Pap Thomas to be in such a hurry before."

After the courier had departed, Thomas said to Fred: "This is heavy news that you bring, Captain. That Bragg is before us with his whole army is no surprise, but that Longstreet is coming is news indeed. But without the coming of Longstreet, never was the Army of the Cumberland in as desperate a situation as it is now. And the trouble is, General Rosecrans is blind to the situation. I have just received the sharpest kind of a reprimand from him because I am not in Lafayette. He thinks Negley's falling back was over-cautiousness. Your father, Captain, was right. Nothing but the most stupendous blunders on the part of Bragg can save the Army of the Cumberland from total defeat. My corps is safe for the present; but there can be but little doubt he will strike one of the other corps."

"Will the blow fall on McCook, or Crittenden?" asked Fred.

"I should say Crittenden," replied the general. "To attack McCook would take him too far from Chattanooga. Then McCook has the mountain to fall back on, the same as I. Crittenden is on comparatively open ground. With him defeated, Chattanooga would be in Bragg's grasp, and McCook and I would be cut off from our base of supplies. If Bragg is any general, he will attack Crittenden, and that without delay. The next few days, if not hours, will be eventful ones. But, Captain, you must need rest. I can do nothing until I hear from General Rosecrans; therefore try to get some sleep."

"First," said Fred, and his voice trembled, "tell me about Smith and Darling. Did they get in all right?"

"It was Darling," replied Thomas, "that saved Negley. The poor fellow was severely but not dangerously wounded. I shall remember him when he gets well. Smith has not been heard from; he was either killed or captured."

This was sad news to Fred. The grizzled old scout was very dear to him. It was many a day before Fred knew what had become of Smith, and then it was to learn that he was suffering the horrors of Andersonville.

CHAPTER XXI.

CARRYING THE NEWS TO MCCOOK.

GENERAL Rosecrans sat in his headquarters at Chattanooga. There was a deep frown on his face, and it was plain to be seen that he was greatly displeased. He had made one of the most brilliant moves of the war; Chattanooga was his, but he saw, as he thought, the Confederate army slipping away from him, and this through the incompetency or timidity of his generals. Turning to Garfield, his chief of staff, he said:

“General, what do you think of that story that Thomas sends in that the whole of the rebel army is before him, and that Bragg has never retreated farther than Lafayette?”

“I think it very improbable,” replied Garfield, “although it conforms to the story of the contraband we all laughed at. I see you have acted on that so far as to order Crittenden to concentrate his corps at Lee and Gordon’s Mill.”

“Yes; but I do not know but it was a mistake, and that it would have been better to order Crittenden to march on Lafayette at once. I am out of all patience with both Thomas and McCook.

Thomas should have been in Lafayette three days ago. I think Negley was more scared than hurt; the Confederates always put on a bold front when retreating. As for McCook, he should have struck a telling blow on Bragg's flank before this; but as far as I can make out, he is hugging Alpine yet."

"If Bragg is at Lafayette with his whole army, we are in a desperate fix," replied Garfield; "and it is fortunate that neither Thomas nor McCook has attempted to carry out their orders."

"I cannot believe it," said Rosecrans, pettishly. "Everything points to the fact that Bragg is in full retreat."

Before Garfield could answer, a courier, riding a foaming horse, dashed up, dismounted, brushed past the guards without ceremony, and handed General Rosecrans a dispatch. The general hastily broke it open, and as he read he grew pale, his hands trembled, and great beads of perspiration gathered on his forehead. Garfield looked on his chief with amazement. Never had he seen him so moved.

When Rosecrans finished reading the dispatch, he handed it without a word to Garfield. That officer read it with scarcely less emotion than his chief.

"Great God!" burst from his lips, as he gathered its import.

"Garfield," exclaimed Rosecrans, "we have made a terrible mistake. Our only salvation lies in uniting the army, and then falling back on Chatta-

nooga. McCook is in great danger; so is Crittenden. Neither Thomas nor Crittenden can be moved until McCook is drawn in. Will Bragg lie still, waiting for Longstreet, until I can unite my army? I am afraid not."

"It is a wonder he has not struck before this," answered Garfield. "He did try to strike Thomas, but that officer eluded him. General, instead of reprimanding Thomas, as you have done, you should have given him the highest praise. His backward movement saved his corps."

"I know it, I know it," hastily said Rosecrans. "I should have had more confidence in Thomas. He is my right arm in this extremity. Bragg's next blow will fall on Crittenden or McCook."

Orders were sent to McCook to join Thomas; to Thomas to hold his position until joined by McCook; to Crittenden to defend the roads to Chattanooga to the last man. This done, there was nothing for Rosecrans to do but to wait.

Swift as horses could carry him, the courier rode back to Thomas, who, on reading his orders, said to Fred: "Rosecrans is now fully alive to the situation. I must remain here until joined by McCook. Captain, you have the swiftest horse in the army. Take these dispatches to McCook. You also know the situation, and can give the general full information. Tell him the safety of the whole army depends on the celerity of his movement."

Fred, on his way to McCook, had to cross Look-out Mountain, then ride up Wills Valley to Win-

ston's Gap, then recross the mountain to Alpine. It was a long, hard, and rugged ride. Nobly did Prince do his part of the work, and mile after mile was swiftly passed.

As Fred rode along, his thoughts were busy. How much had passed since he took that ride from Danville to Nicholasville over two years before. It seemed to him his bright, joyous boyhood had fled with that ride. How old he had grown; he was almost nineteen! What! only nineteen! Surely a generation had passed since he and his cousin stood under the spreading oak, and with clasped hands took that solemn oath. Where was Calhoun now? With the capture of Morgan, he had disappeared as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed him. He must be dead, and a great sob arose in Fred's throat. And his father—once more they were confronting each other in opposing armies. Oh! how cruel it all was! Why should the North and the South fight? Would the conflict never end?

But youth is buoyant, and these gloomy reflections gave way to thoughts of the present, of his mission, and he gave Prince free rein. McCook was still at Alpine when Fred placed the dispatches in his hand.

The general read them, and then asked abruptly: "When did you leave General Thomas?"

Fred told him. McCook looked astonished.

"Do you mean to tell me you have ridden from General Thomas in such a short time?"

"Your dispatches are urgent, General."

"Ah! then you know what they are? Can you give any additional information, Captain?"

"All there is, General." Fred then gave McCook an account of his scout and the information learned.

"I was confident all the time," said McCook, "that Bragg was not retreating on Rome. If I had thought so, you would not have found me here. But Longstreet's coming—that is news indeed."

McCook had already given the necessary orders for the withdrawal of his corps.

"Fortunately," said he, "I have not moved my train down from the mountain; this will expedite matters."

"Then you are not going to move down the valley?" asked Fred, in some surprise, for by the valley road he knew McCook could join Thomas in one day.

"I dare not," answered McCook. "It would expose me to the attack of the whole of Bragg's army."

"But suppose Bragg has concentrated on Crittenden?"

"In that case I could march down the valley; but that is something I do not know. The only safe plan is to move back over the mountain. It will take three days, but it will insure the safety of my corps."

"And time is so precious," thought Fred to himself. "But the general may be right; it would be awkward for him to run into Bragg's army."

Fred rested until morning; then told McCook he was going to return by the valley. McCook looked at him in amazement.

"Captain, I must remonstrate," he said. "It is madness on your part."

"General," replied Fred, "you forget that I am a scout; that it is of the utmost importance for General Thomas and General Rosecrans to know whether Bragg is concentrating on you, or whether Crittenden must expect the blow. Perhaps I alone can get through easier than you could with your corps. If it come to the worst, I can take to the mountain. I believe it is my duty to gain this information, if I can."

"It is certainly important," answered McCook, "but the undertaking is a desperate one."

With a gay farewell, and "I will meet you at General Thomas's headquarters," Fred rode away; but in his heart he knew that his chances of ever seeing those headquarters again were none of the best.

But his plans were well matured. Instead of taking the road, he clung to the base of the mountain. If an open place was to be crossed, he carefully scanned his front before venturing over. He thus advanced nearly ten miles without adventure. He saw several parties of cavalry at a distance, but no infantry. It was plain that no large body of the enemy was threatening McCook. At last, coming to a place where the road ran quite close to the mountain, and seeing none of the enemy, Fred

resolved to take the road and make better progress. He rode for about a mile at a rapid rate, and was congratulating himself on his progress, when Prince began to show uneasiness.

"Why, old fellow, what is it?" asked Fred.

He soon found out. Around a bend in the road swept a squadron of Confederate cavalry. They were right upon him. Fred speedily wheeled Prince, scaled a fence which ran along the side of the road, then like the wind sped across the open field, lying close to his horse's neck. A scattering volley was fired, but none of the balls took effect. The field crossed, another fence was jumped, and the base of the mountain reached.

In their futile rage the Confederates continued firing, some of them throwing down the fences and pursuing Fred to the base of the mountain.

"No use, boys," said the colonel in command, "you might as well cease firing; the fellow has escaped, curse him."

"No, he hasn't," spoke up a young lieutenant. "There are palisades at the top, and he can't scale them, at least his horse can't, and I had rather have the horse than the Yank. Zounds! didn't he take those fences beautifully! There is not a horse in our regiment that could do it."

The colonel smiled. "You always did like a fine horse, Chambers," he said. "What do you want to do?"

"Catch that fellow, or what is better, his horse. By Jupiter! he has dismounted, and the horse is

following him like a dog. Colonel, I must have him."

It was true. Fred, finding the mountain very steep, had dismounted, and Prince was following him, picking his way as carefully as a mountain goat.

"Go ahead and get him, if you can, Chambers," said the colonel.

The lieutenant quickly made his plans. Four men were sent up the mountain directly after Fred. A sergeant and four men were ordered to ride rapidly to the rear about a mile; the horses were to be left in charge of one of the men, while the sergeant and three men were to ascend the mountain and cut off Fred's retreat if he turned back. The lieutenant with four men rode to the front some distance; then leaving the horses with one of their number, the lieutenant and three of his men commenced the ascent of the mountain, thus effectually cutting Fred off. Unless the palisades could be scaled, Fred seemed doomed to be captured. He saw the four men climbing the mountain behind him, but knew nothing of those in rear and front.

After a hard climb Fred reached the top of the slope, and to his dismay found a perpendicular wall of rock from thirty to fifty feet high. It might be scaled in places by a man, but never by a horse, and Fred had no thoughts of leaving Prince.

"I may find a place where it is possible for Prince to get up," he said, "and I believe we can travel as fast as those fellows behind."

But he had not gone far when he caught sight of the lieutenant and his three men. Do the best he could, they would reach the palisades before he could pass them. His heart sank. He glanced upward. A tree grew so that by climbing it he could reach a footing where he could reach the top. But could he leave Prince? He shuddered.

When Fred stopped, the horse seemed to divine his thoughts, for he came to him and touched his cheeks with his nose and looked at him with soft, pleading eyes, as if to say, "Don't leave me, my master."

"No, no," cried Fred; "I will not leave you. I will die with you first. As for those who would tear you from me, their blood be on their own heads."

Seeing a large boulder, large enough to conceal Prince if lying down, he led the horse to it, and at the word of command Prince stretched himself out behind it. Then concealing himself, with revolver in hand, Fred awaited the issue. It was four against one, but Fred had the advantage.

By this time the lieutenant and his men had reached the palisades, not more than fifty yards from where Fred lay concealed. They looked around confounded.

"Where in the world could he have gone?" asked the lieutenant. "The man could conceal himself, but not the horse. He must have seen us, and turned back. Come on, men. We will have him now,

sure; he will run right into Sergeant Gilson and his men. The horse is mine. As for the Yank, if he shows fight—bah! what does it matter if we leave his body to rot?”

When Fred heard these words, all pity died from his heart; he took no more thought of human life. He was a soldier, his mission to kill.

Suddenly the sharp report of a revolver rang out, and the lieutenant threw up his hands and sank down in a heap. Another report, and one of the men pitched heavily forward to the earth. The remaining two, bewildered, terror-stricken, fired their carbines at random and turned to flee. A ball caught one in the leg, and the other losing his footing went rolling down the mountain, and brought up against a boulder with a broken arm. The fight was over; it had lasted scarcely ten seconds.

“Come, Prince,” said Fred, “the way is open.”

The lieutenant, who had been shot through the right breast, had partly raised himself, and was reclining against a rock. As Fred passed him he murmured “Water,” and looked at Fred with wistful eyes.

Fred unslung his canteen and held it to the lips of the wounded officer. He drank eagerly, and then whispered, “Thank you.”

He was a fine-looking fellow, and Fred’s heart grew pitiful as he saw him lying there so helpless.

“May God grant your wound may not prove fatal,” said Fred, as he took his hand. “I am sorry I had to shoot you.”

"You did no more than I would have done to you," gasped the officer. "It was the horse I was after."

"And it was for the horse I fought," replied Fred. "If it had not been for the horse, I could have escaped without hurting any of you."

But Fred had to hasten, as the sound of the firing had alarmed the four men, who were coming up the mountain, and he could hear them shouting.

After going about half a mile, Fred found a break in the palisades, and he and Prince were soon safe on top of the mountain. To reach General Thomas was now an easy matter.

"There is no infantry," reported Fred, "confronting McCook. He could have come down the valley, but it is now too late for him to profit by the knowledge."

"Would he had known it," said Thomas. "Even minutes are precious. I should not be surprised to hear at any moment that Crittenden has been crushed."

And it was only through Bragg's blunders and the disobedience of orders by General Polk that Crittenden was not crushed. When the attempt against Negley failed, Bragg concluded to leave Thomas and attack Crittenden. He gave strict orders to Polk to attack the force at Lee and Gordon's Mill, telling him there was but one division there. In this the Confederate commander was mistaken; Crittenden's whole corps was there. But Bragg told Polk that if he found a heavier force than ex-

pected, he would support him, if necessary, with the whole army.

Crittenden, in ignorance of the danger menacing him, and still under the impression that the force in his front was only Forrest's cavalry, ordered General Beatty to make a reconnoissance with his brigade. This brigade advanced about three miles, and to avoid being flanked by Forrest threw out a very strong and long skirmish line. This skirmish line met the advance of Polk's corps, and drove it back on the main body. Polk, frightened, drew back, selected a strong position, commenced to fortify, and sent back word to Bragg to hurry forward reinforcements, as he was about to be attacked by a vastly superior force. Thus was Crittenden saved as by a miracle.

Bragg stormed and raved over the second miscarriage of his plans, but his own course now became extremely vacillating. He thought he would attack Crittenden again, then Thomas, but at last concluded to await the arrival of Longstreet.

It took McCook three days to reach Thomas, days of anxiety and uncertain waiting. During these three days Rosecrans did not sleep a moment, and hardly tasted a mouthful of food. He was pale, haggard, and exceedingly nervous. Not a courier would ride up to his headquarters but he would start and turn pale, expecting to hear tidings of disaster. These days of suspense and anxious waiting made General Rosecrans almost a nervous wreck. The Rosecrans who fought the battle of Chicka-

mauga was not the Rosecrans who fought the battle of Stone River, and was far from being the Rosecrans who had planned this campaign, which thus far had been masterly.

It was the 17th of September when McCook joined Thomas, and to that general's surprise he found that McCook had left three brigades back at Valley Head under the command of General Lytle.

For a moment General Thomas was speechless. Then giving McCook a look which he never forgot, he said: "And you did this, knowing that it was a matter of life and death that the army be united as soon as possible!" General McCook flushed, and then explained that the safety of his trains depended on Lytle being left behind.

"And yet you knew," continued Thomas, coldly, "that Longstreet was coming, that Bragg was in our front and might strike at any moment. This means three more days of waiting. The battle will be lost or won before that time."

Never had Fred seen Thomas so moved, or so near showing anger.

"Pardon me, gentlemen," said Fred, stepping modestly forward, "but I believe I can bring General Lytle's command here by to-morrow evening."

Both Thomas and McCook looked inquiringly, but at the same time incredulously, at him.

"There is a road," began Fred, hurriedly, "along the top of the mountain. In returning from carrying the dispatches to General McCook I followed it after I took to the mountain and gained

the summit. I have inquired about it and have good reasons to believe that this road extends clear to Valley Head, though it has long been abandoned. If it does, it is but one day's march for General Lytle to join us. Give me an escort, and I will follow this road to Valley Head and guide General Lytle back over it."

General McCook caught at the idea. "I believe Captain Shackelford is right," he said to General Thomas. "I heard of this road, and thought of taking it, but I dared not trust my corps to an uncertainty."

"It is worth trying," replied General Thomas.

"Captain, I will send my mounted escort with you, for the way may be dangerous, and you must not be allowed to fail for want of proper protection."

But to General Thomas' dismay, it was found that his escort was away guarding a forage train. Only seven mounted men could be found available for the undertaking.

"I will make the attempt with them," said Fred. "A small party can travel faster than a large one."

"Very well, Captain," said General Thomas eagerly, "I would not order you to undertake this dangerous mission, but if you volunteer to do it I shall be delighted."

It was late in the afternoon when the little party started. At first they traveled rapidly, for Fred knew the road. A few small scouting parties of the

enemy were sighted, but they hastily fled at the sight of the Federals. Night soon fell. The road was much obscured and hardly more than a trail. It would be easy to wander from it in the darkness.

"I must trust my horse," thought Fred. And all through the night Prince, with more than human instinct, picked the way.

Morning had not yet dawned when Fred reached the outposts of General Lytle near Valley Head. The general was aroused, and as soon as it was light he put his command in motion. But, much to Fred's chagrin, he expressed himself as very doubtful of the practicability of the route. Quite a fog covered the mountain, and after marching three or four miles, the way became uncertain, and the road was hardly discernible.

General Lytle halted his command, and turning to Fred, said: "Pardon me, Captain, but I dare not follow you farther. I am responsible for the safety of my command. You never could have come over this road in the dark. You must have missed the way. I must return to my camp."

Fred's heart sank at these words. He knew the momentous issue at stake. He felt sure he was right, but how could he convince General Lytle? It was dark when he had passed over the road; there were no landmarks he could recognize. He grew faint and giddy and reeled in his saddle. Suddenly there flashed in his mind a recollection of just where he was.

"General," he answered, striving to keep his voice from betraying his feelings, "I am almost positive this is the way I came. If it is, less than a mile in advance there is a dip in the ridge through which flows a small stream, and the margins of the stream are sandy. The tracks of our horses must show plainly in this sand. Send one of your staff forward with me to see if it is not as I say."

Turning to one of his staff, General Lytle said, coldly: "You can go with the captain, but I have little faith. If you are not back in fifteen minutes, I shall give the order to countermarch."

Fred rode away, his breast torn with conflicting emotions. What if he was mistaken? He could never look General Thomas in the face again. They had ridden scarcely more than half a mile when Fred's heart gave a great bound. Before them lay the ravine; through it flowed the little stream. In its sandy banks were the prints of the horses' hoofs—eight, just the number in Fred's party.

The staff officer was convinced, and riding back so reported to General Lytle, and the march was resumed with alacrity. Before night General Lytle had joined his corps at McLemore's Cove.

Never did Fred receive a warmer grasp of the hand than General Thomas gave him when he reported the success of his mission.

"You have rendered the country valuable services," said the general, "but never have you done a greater service than this. We now have

a reunited army. The battle will open to-morrow.' '*

All day long during the 18th of September the Federal army had seen in their front vast clouds of dust moving northward, arising above the treetops. Bragg was trying to cut Rosecrans off from Chattanooga. Night came, and all that separated the two armies was the sluggish current of the Chickamauga.

*This account of a young staff officer volunteering to reach General Lytle by a road which he believed to exist along the mountain top, and to conduct him to join Thomas by this short route, is an actual fact. The officer is still alive, and is one of the best known and most honored citizens of Chicago, Ill. It is a sad fact that General Lytle, a very gallant and brilliant officer, reached the field only to be killed in the next morning's battle.

CHAPTER XXII.

CHICKAMAUGA.

THE coming of darkness brought little rest to the weary soldiers. All through the night the tramp of marching columns and the rumbling of artillery could be heard. General Thomas moved his corps by the rear of Crittenden to the left flank of the army. It was the post of danger, for it guarded the roads to Chattanooga, and Rosecrans had learned that where the danger was greatest there Thomas should be.

Morning came. The rising sun kissed the hills, and then the valleys. Throughout the woods and hid in the tangled thickets along the banks of the Chickamauga lay one hundred and twenty thousand men, ready to grapple in a death struggle. Like beasts hid in the jungle, they lay crouched ready for a spring. Higher and higher rose the sun, yet all peaceful lay the field of Chickamauga. The silence was appalling, harder to bear than the roar of battle.

Nine o'clock came, and General Thomas said: "I do not believe Bragg has yet crossed the river with the bulk of his army, or he would have been upon us before this."

But the fact was, Bragg did not know that Thomas was where he was. He had no knowledge of the midnight movement that placed Thomas on the left. He thought that the left of the Federal army still rested at Lee and Gordon's Mill, and he was massing his forces to crush it, just as he had crushed the right at Stone River.

As General Thomas was speaking, an officer rode up and said: "General, I have it on good authority that there are only two brigades of the enemy across the river. I believe by a rapid movement they can be captured. Shall I make the trial?"

"By all means, if you think the information correct," answered Thomas.

Soon, away off in front came the sound of a few irregular shots, and then the crash of volleys of musketry. The battle of Chickamauga had opened.

This movement of Thomas took Bragg by surprise. Instead of crushing the Federal left, he found his own right being turned. Troops that were marching toward Lee and Gordon's Mill were hurried back and hurled on Thomas. For two hours Thomas bore the burden; the remainder of the army lay and listened. All that could be seen of the battle was the smoke of the conflict which arose above the tree-tops, as if a city were burning. Then the pressure became so great that Thomas called for reinforcements. It was afternoon before the battle became general along the whole line.

Only once during the day was the Federal army

in grave danger. About three o'clock Bragg made a desperate charge with two divisions and pierced the left center of the army, gaining the coveted Chattanooga road. Hugh Raymond had gone to Rosecrans to ask for reinforcements, and was coming back just as the break occurred, and was caught in the mad rush backward.

There was but one brigade in hand to check the charge until the fleeing soldiers could be halted and reformed. Hugh's regiment belonged to this brigade, and when he saw it flung into the breach, he forgot he was an orderly for General Thomas, and spurring his horse forward, he waved his hat and cheered the men on. His horse fell dead, but on foot he pressed his way to the foremost rank. When nearly surrounded, the regiment broke. Hugh seized the colors, and succeeded in rallying it and checking for a time the advance of the enemy. In the precious minutes thus gained a line was formed in the rear, and twenty frowning cannon now stood in a row. Between these guns the regiment passed, and then they belched forth their contents of shell and canister. So rapid was the firing that the reports seemed to blend into one. The smoke settled down over the field, hiding everything from view. For five minutes the cannon thundered.

"Cease firing!"

The hot-throated cannon became silent; the smoke slowly ascended from the field—and what a sight!

The charging columns had disappeared back

across the road into the woods; but on the field lay the dead and dying—mounds of gray that a moment before had been men.

The colonel of Hugh's regiment came to him, and warmly grasping his hand, said: "Hugh, General Thomas must not have you any longer. Your company has need of you. All of its commissioned officers are killed or wounded. You are now Lieutenant Raymond."

So Hugh came to command his company.

After the charge was repulsed, the Federal lines swept forward, and at nightfall the two armies occupied nearly the same positions they had in the morning. The fight was kept up on the left long into the night; but at last the firing sullenly died away, and the weary soldiers sank on the ground to sleep, unmindful of the dead around them.

Rosecrans called a council of his generals, but to all questions Thomas had but one answer: "Look well to the left."

General Rosecrans gave orders that at daylight Negley's division should move from the center to the extreme left, thus giving Thomas the strength that he asked. Wood's division of Crittenden's corps was ordered to take the place of Negley in the center.

Thomas spent the night in rearranging his lines, and preparing for the dreadful struggle which he knew was coming. He did not close his eyes.

"What of the prospect in the morning?" asked Fred of a brother staff officer.

The officer looked grave. "To-morrow," he answered, "we shall have to struggle for our existence. Twice to-day we have narrowly escaped disaster. The army is loosely thrown together; the corps, in a great measure, are broken up. In Thomas's command are divisions from all three corps. Rosecrans—" The officer stopped. He was too true a soldier to utter a word of criticism against his commanding general.

But Fred knew well what was in his mind. Rosecrans had not his army well in hand. The strain of the past week had left its effects. He was nervous, and disposed to listen to every rumor.

Morning came. A heavy fog hung over the earth, and for a time the sun refused to give its light. The minutes passed, and the field remained as strangely quiet as it had been the morning before. In vain Thomas looked for Negley. Every moment he expected to hear the yell of the advancing foe. Time passed; still no Negley.

"Ride to the right, Captain," said General Thomas to Fred, "and see why Negley is not here." And then he added, "It's strange that Bragg does not attack."

Prince had been slightly wounded the night before, and Fred had sent him back to Chattanooga. This wound saved Prince's life, for during the battle of the 20th Fred had two horses shot under him.

As Rosecrans had given orders for Negley to be on the left by daylight, so had Bragg given orders

to Polk to attack the left at daylight. Both commanders were disobeyed. Polk did not advance until half past eight, and his charge did not come until nine. This delay was of inestimable value to Thomas.

When Fred reached the center he found that Negley had not moved, Wood not having relieved him. Rosecrans at once ordered Wood to relieve Negley, and sent the reserve brigade of that general to the left under the guidance of Fred. It arrived none too soon. At nine o'clock a tremendous assault was made on the left flank, and it was repulsed only after the most terrific fighting. The battle now rolled to the south, and soon the whole of Thomas's line was engaged. Assault after assault was repulsed; Thomas's lines were immovable.

But in vain he looked for Negley's two remaining brigades. Every moment he expected another assault on his extreme left flank.

Speaking to Fred, he said: "Go once more, and see what has become of Negley."

Away galloped Fred on his mission. All along the front the battle roared and thundered. Great clouds of smoke arose above the tree-tops and drifted away. Hundreds of wounded men were seeking the rear. Many of these men were still full of fight, and were cheering and urging on the regiments they met going into the battle. Cannon balls were ricochetting over the ground, as if giants were playing at ten-pins. Batteries were dashing

along at full speed, heeding neither the living nor the dead.

Fred soon passed beyond the battle; the right of the army was not yet engaged. Longstreet's terrific blow had not yet fallen. To his surprise, Fred found that Negley had not yet been relieved from the front line.

When he reported the fact to Rosecrans, that general rode to Wood and reprimanded him in the severest terms for not obeying orders. Wood turned pale with suppressed anger, but without a word relieved Negley; and Fred, supposing that that general would at once move to the left with his command, galloped back and reported to Thomas that the needed reinforcements were coming.

But Negley never reached Thomas. Why, has never been clearly shown.

Now occurred a mistake which lost the battle of Chickamauga to the Federals. Some officer went to Rosecrans and told him there was a gap in the line between Wood and Reynolds. There was no gap. Brannon's division, one of the finest in the army, was between Wood and Reynolds. This Rosecrans should have known, but it seemed he had lost track of the positions of divisions. Without investigating whether the report was true or not, he at once wrote an order and dispatched it to Wood to close up on Reynolds and support him.

When Wood received the order, he smiled

grimly, folded it up, placed it in his pocketbook, and remarked that he was glad it was in writing.

"What is it?" asked one of his brigade commanders, to whom the remark was addressed.

"To close up on Reynolds, and support him," was the answer.

"You can't do it; Brannon is between us."

"I shall move in the rear of Brannon," coolly replied Wood.

"Great Heavens! General, that will leave a gap in the line; the enemy is forming in the woods in front to attack."

"Nevertheless, I shall obey the order," replied Wood, as a dark scowl passed over his face. "General Rosecrans will never have another opportunity to talk to me as he did a short time ago. I have the order, here it is—" and he tapped his breast pocket—"and it shall be obeyed."

"But the gap, General, the gap!"

"I shall send an aide to both McCook and Davis with word that I am about to move out of the line, and let them fill it as best they can."

So Wood withdrew from the line, leaving a great gap, nearly half a mile long.

Up to this time the right of the Federal army had not been engaged. But Longstreet was massing twenty-five thousand men for a tremendous onslaught. His quick eye caught the great gap which Wood had left, and through it his legions poured. They caught Jefferson C. Davis's division, consisting of only two small brigades, as it was

moving to the left, vainly trying to fill the gap, and scattered it like chaff.

They then wheeled, and struck Sheridan's division in flank and rear. In vain the gallant Sheridan tried to stem the tide; his division was hurled back, but not broken and disorganized as was Davis's. In less than half an hour after Longstreet's first attack the whole right wing was fleeing in rout and panic for Rossville or Chattanooga.

Rosecrans, McCook, and Crittenden were caught in the rush, and swept back to Rossville. The whole of Crittenden's corps, with the exception of two brigades, was with Thomas, and he was virtually without a command.

At Rossville Rosecrans met a large number of Negley's division. Thinking that the division had gone to the left as ordered, he asked them of news from Thomas. It was a woeful tale the cowards told him: Thomas was killed, Crittenden was killed, the whole left was broken worse than the right.

Then, in utter despair, Rosecrans turned to Garfield and asked him what he should do. His advice was the undoing of Rosecrans, although it was good on the supposition that the story of Negley's men was true. It was to go to Chattanooga and try to save the remnant of the army, while Garfield himself would try to reach the left.

Rosecrans accepted the advice; his heart was broken, his courage gone. Those who saw him on his ride from Rossville to Chattanooga will never

forget him. His face was like marble; all expression of life had left it. He looked neither to the right nor the left, but rode like a man in a dream. When he reached his headquarters in Chattanooga he sank into a chair and buried his face in his hands. McCook and Crittenden came in, but not a word was spoken. Like their chief, they sat silent and in despair.

An officer, on a foaming steed, came dashing up to the door. Throwing himself from the horse, he rushed up to Rosecrans, and thrust a dispatch into his hands, exclaiming, "It's from General Garfield."

Trembling with eagerness, Rosecrans tore the dispatch open and read:

"Thomas standing like a rock. Has seven divisions intact."

The general became as one awakened from the dead. Color came to his face, fire to his eye. Springing to his feet, he waved the dispatch above his head and shouted: "All is not lost! All is not lost! Thomas holds!"

Then as if noticing McCook and Crittenden for the first time, he said: "This is no place for you, gentlemen. To your commands!"

It was no place for him, either. If when at Rossville the spirit of Stone River had animated Rosecrans, he could have collected ten thousand men and hurled them on the flank and in the rear of Longstreet, and gained the greatest victory of the war. But it was not to be; the star of Rosecrans had set.

When Longstreet broke the right he did not pursue the shattered regiments, but allowed them to make their retreat unmolested. Instead, he made a wheel to the right and fell upon Thomas.

When Fred returned and reported that Negley was at last on the way, Thomas said: "With Negley the left is safe."

But time passed, and no Negley. The sound of fighting on the right rolled on toward Chattanooga, and Thomas became anxious. Then came the news that Polk was gathering his forces for another desperate effort to turn the left flank. Taking his three reserve brigades, Thomas rushed to the point of danger. Like a torrent the Confederate force poured around the flank and in the rear of Baird.

In the tangled woods this torrent met the three brigades of Thomas. It was the most dreadful conflict Fred ever witnessed. The two lines met face to face, and for a time poured their volleys into each other's breasts. Once, through the swirling smoke, Fred thought he caught a glimpse of his father, cheering on his men, but just then Fred's horse fell, the smoke settled down, and all was lost from view.

"O Father in Heaven!" whispered Fred, with white lips, "protect him."

At last the Confederate torrent was rolled back; the left was again saved.

Now from the right there came drifting broken fragments of regiments, and the story of the great disaster was known. With the broken regiments

came the divisions of Brannon and Wood, only four small brigades strong. On Snodgrass Hill Thomas formed his slender line—a hill that is to remain as memorable as the field of Marathon. Wood formed on the left of Brannon, and as if to atone for what he had done, he held his division like a wall of adamant. Throughout that dreadful afternoon his lines were not shaken. The divisions of Wood and Brannon, with the fragments of regiments which joined them, met and hurled back the veterans of Longstreet time after time.

At length seeing how weak and short Thomas's line was, Longstreet massed his forces to turn his right flank. Thomas looked anxiously to his right. At the point threatened Thomas had not a single man.

"Captain," he said to Fred, "ride over to the right and see what you can discover."

Fred rode clear beyond the fighting, and then ascended the hill. Just as he reached the summit he was met with a volley, and glancing down the gorge toward the Videto house he saw the legions of Longstreet coming. He turned, and putting spurs to his horse, bore to Thomas the fateful tidings.

The chieftain heard, and his great heart grew faint. He looked up and down his slender line, enveloped in a cloud of smoke. From out the sulphurous canopy there came yells of triumph, shouts of victory. His men had once more hurled back the charging columns of the enemy. Not a regiment, not a company, could be spared from that line.

"Twenty minutes," he said, as if to himself, "and all will be over. Twenty minutes—" The voice broke.

Fred sat on his horse as if stunned. There was a roaring in his ears, he heard the sound of battle as afar off. Could it be that in twenty minutes the Army of the Cumberland would be no more? He tried to speak, but his voice died away.

He turned and looked to the rear. A great cloud of dust was arising above the tree-tops, and from out the leafy coverts, there sprang out, as if by magic, an army of men. Their waving banners and glistening bayonets flashed in the sunlight like rainbows of hope.

"Look! look!" cried Fred.

General Thomas turned and saw. "It's Granger," he cried, "Granger coming without orders. We are saved!"

Three miles away, guarding the road which led to Rossville, had lain the Reserve corps. All through the day they had listened to the sound of battle. Their orders were strict, to guard the road and keep the enemy from Rossville. Forrest's cavalry hovered around them, and that was all. As the roar of battle grew louder General Gordon Granger turned to the fiery Steadman and said: "They have need of us over there."

"Yes," said Steadman; "we are not needed here; one brigade can hold Forrest. Let's go."

"It's a dreadful thing to disobey orders in time of battle," replied Granger.

"I will take the responsibility," cried Steadman. And so the order was given.

Forrest's cavalry hovered around them like flies, and like flies were brushed aside. He opened on them with two batteries, and shot and shell went crashing through their ranks.

"It is only Forrest," cried General Granger. "Don't mind him, boys; he is only trying to stop us. It is not here we are needed; it is where the battle is roaring." And heedless of the shot and shell, they rushed on. Was the hand of God leading them?

Granger, his swarthy face aflame and his eyes flashing fire, rode up to General Thomas and asked, "Where will you have us, General?"

Thomas pointed to the right, where the skirmishers of Longstreet were just breaking cover. Then turning to Fred, he said: "Captain, you have been over there, and know the lay of the ground. Go and point out the position."

The lines were quickly formed, and at the word of command the men of the West rushed upon the veterans of Longstreet. It was like the meeting of two great storm clouds—broken, shattered, flung back, then reeling to and fro like two giant wrestlers.

For twenty minutes the hill flamed and smoked; for twenty minutes the earth trembled as if rent with infernal thunder.

All at once the Union line faltered, broke, and commenced to fall back. Fred was close to General Steadman when the crisis came. There was

a crashing volley, and both of their horses fell. Springing from his dying steed, Steadman snatched a flag from the hands of a color-bearer and shouted, "Follow me, my men."

As the snow-white plume of Henry of Navarre floated where the battle was fiercest, so did Steadman bear the banner into the thickest of the conflict.

His men saw, and with a mighty shout they sprang forward and the victory was won. Back over the hill the Confederates fled, and the Army of the Cumberland was saved.

With the excitement of battle thrilling every nerve, Fred found his way back to General Thomas. He saw victory still in the grasp of the Federal army, and his heart beat high. But his hopes were dashed to the earth when he found Thomas in consultation with Garfield, and heard that General Rosecrans had ordered a retreat. There was a tremor in Thomas's voice as he turned to his chief of staff and said: "The army is saved from annihilation, but not from defeat; I have orders to fall back to Rossville."

So in the gathering gloom of night the army fell back, leaving the field to the exultant foe. But Bragg could well exclaim as did Pyrrhus when he defeated the Romans, "One more such victory, and I am undone."*

* According to the Confederate reports there were more Confederate soldiers killed and wounded at the battle of Chickamauga than in any other one battle fought during the war, Gettysburg not excepted. Bragg acknowledged a loss of forty per cent of his whole army. On the field of Chickamauga between 30,000 and 40,000 men lay dead and wounded.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BATTLE ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

THE Army of the Cumberland had fallen back and lay around the little city of Chattanooga, its ranks thinned by the battle of Chickamauga, but its spirit still unbroken.

From the lofty summit of Lookout, thousands of feet above them, floated the flag of the Confederacy, and from its crest cannon hurled their iron messengers into the heart of the city.

As Moses, from the top of Pisgah, viewed the Promised Land, so could the Confederates from Lookout see what they had lost and hoped to win back. The State of Tennessee lay like a map spread out before them; while the river, glistening like a great silver ribbon, could be traced for miles in its winding course. Far across the State, in Kentucky, the dim, misty peaks of the Cumberlands could be seen. To the eastward, across plain, mountain ranges, fruitful valleys, and swift-flowing rivers, the lofty summits of the Great Smoky range in North Carolina hung like floating clouds in the horizon. To the west, with its rocky feet bathed in the Tennessee, lay Raccoon Mountain, and across its wooded heights, Alabama, fair as the

fabled Garden of the Gods, lay smiling in the autumn sun. In all the world there is no more beautiful, no grander view than from Lookout Mountain.

All this the Confederates could see but could not possess; for around Chattanooga, with banners proudly waving, was Rosecrans's army. In front of that army Missionary Ridge stretched for miles, and all along its crest camp-fires gleamed and the bayonets of Bragg's army shone. One hundred cannon frowned down on the beleaguered city, ready to vomit forth flame and death on the slightest provocation.

The Army of the Cumberland was besieged. Only from over the mountains across the river, could supplies be brought. This mountain road was lined with dead mules and broken wagons. Here and there smoking piles of twisted iron told where a train had been destroyed by the omnipresent Wheeler or Forrest. And these trains had contained food—food for a famishing army—food more precious than gold.

In Chattanooga the Army of the Cumberland lay starving, yet clinging to the place with desperation. The authorities at Washington had at last waked up to the gravity of the situation, and were doing what they should have done weeks before—hurrying forward reinforcements to save Chattanooga. Hooker was on his way from the Army of the Potomac, with two corps; Sherman was hurrying from Mississippi with two more corps.

Great changes had taken place in the Army of the Cumberland. Rosecrans, McCook, Crittenden, and Negley had been relieved of their commands. Thomas had come into his own; he was in command of the army. Grant had been placed in supreme command.

"Hold on until I come," he telegraphed to Thomas.

"We will hold on until we starve," was the reply.

And starving the army was. Horses perished by the hundreds, until at last there were not enough left to handle one battery of artillery. The men grew pinched and weak. Soldiers, faint with hunger, would stagger out to the picket line, and when taunted by the Confederate pickets over their condition, and told that they would soon be forced to surrender from starvation, they would reply that they were living like lords, and had food to throw away, and would pitch a cracker out of their scanty hoard over to the Confederates to prove it.

At last so great was the famine that to some regiments raw corn was issued—one ear per day to a man. It was no uncommon sight to see soldiers picking undigested grains of corn from the offal of animals, washing, parching, and then eating it. But during all this distress if a soldier had hinted that they ought to give up, he would have suffered violence at the hands of his indignant comrades.

Hooker came, crossed the river at Bridgeport,

and marched through the mountains to Lookout Valley. Here, at Wauhatchie, in the darkness of the night, Longstreet threw his forces on him, but Hooker paid back old scores, and Longstreet was badly defeated.

A few days before, under cover of night, a brigade from Chattanooga had silently floated down the river past Lookout, and effected a landing at Brown's Ferry. A junction was made with Hooker, communications were established with Bridgeport, and the famine days were over. The army had food, clothes, shoes. What rejoicing there was!

Grant now only waited for Sherman to come up to drive the Confederate army from its rocky fastnesses. Sherman came; the Army of the Cumberland and the Army of the Tennessee, divorced after the siege of Corinth, were reunited, never more to be severed. Together they were to sweep forward to Atlanta, and from Atlanta to the sea.

Their deeds were to be the common heritage of both—deeds which were to cover them with imperishable glory.

On the twenty-third of November the Federal Army assembled outside their intrenchments as for a grand review. The Confederates saw, and thinking they were about to look upon a grand military pageant, let the army form undisturbed.

Suddenly the Federal lines swept forward; the review had been turned into the stern reality of war. The Confederate outposts were captured,

and the commanding position of Orchard Knob was won.

In the evening General Thomas gave Fred a dispatch to take to Hooker. It was an order for him to storm Lookout Mountain in the morning.

"And, Captain," said General Thomas, "you can stay and witness the battle; I do not look for much fighting in our front to-morrow."

To join Hooker Fred had to cross the river, ride over Moccasin Point, and then recross the river at Brown's Ferry. When General Hooker read the order his face lighted up with joy, and turning to his staff he said: "There will be rare sport to-morrow, gentlemen. We are to storm the mountain."

The staff looked up at the rocky heights and shook their heads. It did, indeed, look like an act of madness to attempt to capture those heights.

In the gray of the morning General Hooker formed his lines. A thick mist covered the valley and hid his movements from the enemy. The Confederate pickets were surprised and captured; then up the mountain side clambered the men, dragging themselves upward by tree and shrub.

At last the lines were formed, the mists arose, and the army moved forward. The rugged sides of Lookout soon became aflame with flashing muskets and resounded with the shouts of the combatants. Behind every tree and rock death lurked. Down the mountain side great stones came crashing. The lines would open, and they would go thundering on.

Nothing could stop the onward sweep of the Union lines. The roar of battle could be heard in Chattanooga and along the heights of Missionary Ridge. At length the Confederates were pressed around the point of the mountain, and the battle came into full view of those gazing from the plain below. On the plateau half way up the mountain side, around the Craven house, the conflict raged in all its fury. A hundred thousand men stood and gazed in awe. The two armies forgetting that they were enemies, became spectators, and watched unmolested the sublime spectacle.

Suddenly the mists closed down, as if Lookout would veil his face from the bloody scene enacted on his rugged side.

When Jehovah met Moses face to face on Mount Sinai, the children of Israel, on bended knees, raised their affrighted eyes, but saw only a thick cloud, out of which came terrible thundering and vivid flashes of light; so now was the battle hid from those who gazed, but from out the cloud there came thunderings, fitful flashes of light, and the shouting of the combatants.

Darkness came, but it was midnight before the lights ceased to leap and dance, and Lookout sank to rest. With the first gleam of dawn a hundred thousand men once more turned their eyes toward Lookout. At first its giant outlines were faintly traced, then stood out in bolder relief. While the valley still lay in somber shadows, the first rays of the rising sun touched his regal brow, and there,

proudly floating in the morning breeze, waved the banner of freedom.

Then there went up from the Federal lines such a shout that its volume filled the valley, echoed and reëchoed along the jagged sides of Lookout, and rolled like a great wave along the crest of Missionary Ridge.

The Confederates saw that flag, all glorious with its shining stars and broad stripes, and turned away with dim eyes and sinking hearts. To them it was the signal of defeat.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE STORMING OF MISSIONARY RIDGE.

THROUGHOUT the battle of Lookout Mountain Fred bore a most honorable part, and was warmly complimented by General Hooker. Once, at least, death was very near him. He was intensely interested in watching the movements of a regiment when he was startled by a soldier near him crying, "Look out, Captain!"

He glanced upward, and saw a great stone rushing down the mountain side, directly upon him. He sprang to one side, just in time to escape it; yet so close did it pass that it brushed his leg as it went bounding on its way, crushing rocks and splintering trees in its course.

"A close call that, Captain," laughed the soldier, but the laugh died away on his lips. He threw up his arms, and plunged headlong down the mountain. A ball had pierced his brain.

So sudden was it that Fred could scarcely realize that his preserver was slain.

"A moment ago," he cried, with quivering lip, "he saved my life, and now he is gone."

A short time afterwards Fred witnessed one of the most distressing incidents he ever saw in a battle.

A Confederate soldier had clung to a rock until the Federals were almost on him. He then started to run, paying no attention to the command to halt. A member of a Kentucky regiment raised his rifle and fired, and the man fell. Going up to him, the soldier found, to his horror, that he had shot his own brother.

Falling on his knees, he raised his brother in his arms, crying: "George! George! Speak to me! Forgive me! O God! What have I done?"

The dying man opened his eyes, smiled, and whispered:

"Is that you, Joe? You didn't mean to do it. It's all right—all right," and he was gone.

"Heaven has been more kind to the dead than the living," thought Fred, as he passed on, leaving the living brother holding the dead one in his arms and sobbing as if his heart would break.

In the early morning, the way now being open, Fred rode down the mountain into Chattanooga and made his report to General Thomas.

"It was a most gallant affair," said the general. "You will never regret you were with General Hooker in his battle among the clouds. It was a conflict that will live in song and story."

"If we could only gain Missionary Ridge as easily," responded Fred, "it would be glorious."

"That we cannot expect to do," answered Thomas. "Sherman had some hot fighting yesterday. We shall see warm work to-day. But, God

willing, I hope to see the old flag waving over Missionary Ridge before night."

"What is the plan of battle to-day?" asked Fred.

"Sherman is to turn the right of the Confederate army, while Hooker is to cross over the valley from Lookout and attack the left." And then he added, with a smile, "When these generals get the Rebels on the run, the Army of the Cumberland is to be allowed to do a little fighting."

General Grant evidently did not understand the Army of the Cumberland. In his plan of battle it was Sherman who was to do most of the fighting and win the glory.

"The Army of the Cumberland," said Grant to Sherman, "are so demoralized by their defeat at Chickamauga, and have been lying here in the trenches so long, I am afraid there is not much fight in them. I want you to assume the offensive, and when they see you fight, no doubt they will do very well."

Little did General Grant think when he uttered these disparaging and cruel words that after Sherman had failed it would be these demoralized soldiers who would sweep up Missionary Ridge, make one of the most brilliant charges in history, and place a laurel wreath on his brow as green and everlasting as the one he won at Vicksburg.

General Grant's plan of battle miscarried. Sherman met with a most stubborn and unexpected resistance. From early morning until the afternoon

the battle raged, but Sherman was unable to advance.

General Grant grew impatient, and about three o'clock in the afternoon, to create a diversion in Sherman's favor, and if possible make Bragg withdraw some of his troops in Sherman's front, he gave orders for the Army of the Cumberland to charge and take the line of earthworks at the foot of Missionary Ridge, and there await further orders.

Fred bore to Wood and Sheridan the order to charge.

"Tell them," said Thomas, "the signal will be six guns fired in rapid succession from Orchard Knob."

Other aides bore the same orders to Baird and Johnson.

When Sheridan received the order he seemed to grow six inches taller. His face glowed with excitement, and his eyes fairly blazed. Sheridan in battle was the very incarnation of war.

It was just half-past three when the six cannon thundered in swift succession from Orchard Knob. Hardly had the last report died away when twenty thousand men sprang to their feet, and with wild cheers dashed forward. Met with storms of shot and shell, they never faltered, but swept the enemy's line as by a whirlwind. The foot of the Ridge was gained.

But what then?

From the heights above thousands of rifles blazed and fifty cannon bellowed. From both flanks shot



Then, as if by common Consent, Officers and Soldiers
started up the Ridge.

and shell came plowing through the ranks. To stay was death; to retreat was dishonor. The soldiers looked into each other's faces inquiringly. Officers grew pale, but had no word of command; they had done all they had been ordered to do.

Then, as if by common consent, without command, officers and soldiers started up the Ridge.

To his astonishment, General Grant saw that the four divisions were charging up the ridge, and turning angrily to Thomas, asked him by whose order it was done.

"I gave no such order," replied Thomas; "did you?" he asked, turning to Granger, the commander of the Fourth corps.

"It was by no order of mine," answered Granger.

"Then by whose order is it?" growled Grant.

"I think," quietly replied Thomas, "it is by no one's order. The men are doing it on their own volition. They found they could not stay where they were, and they would not retreat."

"Well," snapped Grant, "it's all right if it comes out all right. If not, some one will suffer."

And then Grant stood and watched the men who, he thought, would not fight taking Missionary Ridge.

Those of our readers who look upon a charge as a headlong rush of solid columns of men will form a wrong impression of the charge up Missionary Ridge. It was not a rush, but an advance foot by foot, and by an irregular line of men.

Around the standards of the different regiments

the bravest rallied and carried the colors to the front. The line would gradually creep up to them, and then the flags would again be advanced. It took nearly an hour to ascend Missionary Ridge, and all this time it was swept by an iron tempest from fifty cannon and the leaden hail from twenty thousand muskets. Over three thousand of the brave men who started up the Ridge, facing that storm of death, never reached the crest. Their blood dyed the earth and rocks with a deeper crimson than that which colored the leaves of autumn that lay thickly strewn around.

Where was Fred during this time? In the foremost rank, among the heroes who were carrying the flags forward. Fired by the enthusiasm of the moment, he had left his horse and joined in the rush up the Ridge. He soon found himself close to one of the foremost flags. Bearer after bearer had fallen, and Fred, seizing the drooping colors, shouted to the men to come on. They responded with a cheer, and soon they had gained a point just beneath the crest. Other flags came up to the right and left. Fred waited until the little company of men around his flag had grown to a small-sized regiment.

"Now," he cried, and sprang to the front. The men flung themselves forward as if thrown from a catapult.

Cannon bellowed, rifles flashed, bayonet clashed on bayonet; horrid curses, cries, and groans mingled with the thunder of the combat, and then

from the ramparts waved the blood-stained standards of the charging hosts.

In that mad rush Fred was hurled on to the very mouth of a cannon. A gunner was just in the act of discharging it. Fred's revolver spoke, and he sank down a lifeless heap. Stout hands seized the cannon, whirled it around, and a soldier firing his rifle over the vent, sent its contents into the ranks of the fleeing enemy. Fred sprang on the gun, even as it was recoiling, and waved his flag in triumph.

A Confederate officer in front was trying to rally his panic-stricken men. A soldier drew up his gun to shoot him, when Fred, to his horror, discovered that it was his father.

"Not him! not him!" he cried, as he struck the gun down.

Then suddenly his right leg grew numb; at the same time he felt a sharp sting in the shoulder, and he fell backward into the arms of a soldier. But as he fell, he heard the victorious shouts of his comrades above the roar of battle. Missionary Ridge was won.*

*The account of Fred's going up Missionary Ridge is an almost exact statement of the charge of the First Ohio Volunteer Infantry regiment, under the leadership of Colonel Bassett Langdon. The colors of that regiment were among the first, and in all probability the very first, to be planted on the crest of Missionary Ridge. During the charge the colors were borne by six different standard bearers, one of them a Captain, and one a Major.

Corporal Kraemer of the regiment discharged a captured cannon in the way narrated in the story. Colonel Langdon, the gallant leader of the regiment, died of wounds received in the moment of victory.

CHAPTER XXV.

CUPID VERSUS MARS.

A MONTH had come and gone since the charge on Missionary Ridge. The storm of battle which had raged for so many days on the mountains and through the valleys around Chattanooga had passed away, and the two armies lay in winter quarters. Both were preparing for the deadly grapple which must come with spring.

In a room in a private house in Chattanooga Fred lay, comfortably reclining in an invalid chair.

He looked pale and wan, but his smile was bright and his laugh merry, and it was evident he was on the high road to recovery. The wounds he had received, though severe, did not prove mortal.

The surgeon who attended him was just taking his leave, and saying: "You will be walking around in a few days, Captain. It is no wonder you are recovering so rapidly, with two such nurses," and he glanced pleasantly at Kate Shackelford and Mabel Vaughn, who sat in the room engaged with some fancy needlework.

These two young ladies, although so different in temperament and belief, had become bosom friends. The cruel fate which had taken from them their

lovers was a common tie which bound them together. When they heard of Fred being grievously wounded, both came to his bedside, and his rapid recovery was greatly due to their skillful nursing.

"I think," continued the surgeon, "that in a few days I can send you North on a furlough. You will find yourself a hero up there. The papers are filled with your praise. It is asserted that you planted the first flag on the enemy's works, and that it was greatly owing to your valor that the charge on Missionary Ridge was a success."

Fred made a gesture of impatience. "There, Doctor," he exclaimed, "that is enough. I am no more entitled to honor than thousands of others who made that charge. As to the flag I carried being planted on the works first, I think those borne by Colonel Ainsworth and Hugh Raymond were planted fully as quickly as mine; at least there was such a little difference in time it is not worth mentioning."

"Have it your own way, Captain," laughed the surgeon, as he went out, "but the world will have it different."

Here visitors were announced, and Colonel Ainsworth and Hugh Raymond were ushered into the room. Hugh shone resplendent in a new uniform, and a captain's bars glistened on his shoulders.

"Hello!" shouted Fred. "A captain, as sure as I am born! Allow me to congratulate you, my boy."

Hugh took a military position, saluted, and

gravely replied: "Captain Hugh Raymond, at your service; and allow me to say, Captain Frederick Shackelford, as I am of equal rank with you, there is now to be no more bossing on your part."

"Just hear him crow!" said Fred, laughing.

"Captain Raymond is shouting before he is out of the woods," spoke up Colonel Ainsworth. "He should remember that your commission antedates his nearly two years. He may be obliged to obey you yet."

"In that case," replied Hugh, seating himself, with a mock sigh, "I suppose I must be resigned, but it's tough."

Just then an orderly came in with mail, and Kate, receiving a good, fat letter, said: "It's from home. Please excuse me while I retire and read it."

In a few minutes she came rushing into the room crying: "Oh, Fred, Fred! I have good news for you. Your Cousin Calhoun has been heard from. He is alive."

"Alive!" echoed Fred, his face lighting up with joy. "Thank God! Tell us about it, Kate."

"Why, it's just like a romance. It seems that he was desperately wounded in that last fight that Morgan had in Ohio. He was found in what was supposed to be a dying condition and taken to a farmhouse. Here he was nursed back to life by the farmer's daughter, a beautiful girl of seventeen. The result is the old story; they loved each other. It seems that the father is quite a prominent man, and a rabid abolitionist. When he found out how

things stood he forbade his daughter to see Calhoun, and made preparations to turn him over to the Federal authorities. By pretending to be worse than he was, Calhoun managed to stay until he was able to travel, and then the girl aided him to escape."

"Hurrah for the girl!" shouted Hugh.

"Just think of Calhoun falling in love with the daughter of an abolitionist!" exclaimed Fred. "Why, he is as big a fire-eater as Cousin Kate there."

"No, he isn't," exclaimed Kate, with a toss of her pretty head, "or he wouldn't fall in love with the daughter of an abolitionist. I wouldn't marry the best Yankee alive."

Colonel Ainsworth turned white, and looked as if he would sink through the floor, while poor Mabel was white and red by turns. As for Fred, he gave his cousin a look which plainly said, "You are heartless."

Poor Kate realized too late what she had said, and bit her lip in vexation. Hugh came to the rescue cleverly.

"Why, Miss Shackelford," he exclaimed, with an injured air, "that's too bad. I have been thinking the last two minutes about proposing to you."

"Precious little good it would do you," replied Kate, with a dangerous glitter in her eyes. Kate was in no mood for banter. She was angry with herself and everybody else.

Colonel Ainsworth soon excused himself, and as Hugh could find no excuse for staying, he went also.

After they had gone Mabel turned to Kate and said, "Oh, Kate, how could you?"

Kate burst into tears, and sobbed: "Why don't you take him yourself? He is dead in love with you."

"Kate!" The voice was one, not of anger, but of sorrow.

For answer Kate flung herself out of the room. Mabel, who had become very pale, soon excused herself, and Fred was left alone.

It was with a sore heart that Mabel sought Kate.

"Oh! Kate, what made you say it?" sobbed she.

The impulsive girl threw her arms around Mabel's neck. "Mabel! Mabel!" she cried, "forgive me. I did not mean to hurt your feelings. But he adores you; you ought to see it."

"I never suspected it, Kate. All the soldiers are so kind, so gentle to me, as if I were a superior being."

"So you are, Mabel—an angel. You won my heart when you were so kind to the Confederate wounded at Stone River. You showed no difference between them and the Yankees."

"Why should I?" answered Mabel, opening her eyes. "Were they not men? Had they not wives, mothers, and sisters?"

"Oh, Mabel, you are so much better than I! I hate—hate the Northern soldier; I can't help it.

I do not wonder Colonel Ainsworth loves you, you are so good."

"Kate, I never did anything to make Colonel Ainsworth love me. He has never told me he loves me."

"I know that, you dear girl; yet he loves you, and is afraid to speak."

"Please, Kate, do not mention this again," asked Mabel, looking greatly distressed. And Kate promised.

When alone Mabel sat in deep thought. Was Kate right? She now remembered many things she had not thought of before,—his looks, how his eyes followed her as she moved about the ward; how he colored when she spoke to him. She remembered all now, and knew that Kate was right.

She had been told of Ainsworth's love for Kate; how he had intrusted her with his honor, and how it had been betrayed. For this she pitied him, but never thought of loving him. Her heart was true to the memory of her dead lover. Yet, to her surprise, the knowledge that Ainsworth loved her caused her no pain. For this she blamed herself; it was wronging the dead.

On the morrow General Thomas paid a visit to Fred, and was greatly pleased to find him improving so rapidly.

"The surgeon was speaking to me this morning," said the general, "and he thinks he will send you North in a few days. I have made out a ninety-days' furlough for you. There will be no general

movement of the army until spring, and your services will not be needed until then. I want to see you come back well and strong."

Fred thanked the general, and then said, "General, I have a favor to ask of you before I go."

"What is it, Captain? Anything in my power will be cheerfully granted."

"You know my Cousin Kate Shackelford is here. She came to me as soon as she heard I was wounded."

"Ah, yes," said the general, smiling. "I remember; the one who nearly delivered Nashville into the hands of Forrest, and whom you got pardoned. Is she in trouble again?"

"No, General; she has been very quiet since that affair, though I must say she hates the Yankees as much as ever. But I am told she has been very kind to our sick and wounded soldiers in Nashville, and she has certainly proved a faithful nurse to me. What I want to ask is this: Her father is a colonel in the Confederate army. She has not seen him for nearly two years. Can you not arrange to have them meet under a flag of truce? I will see that no army secrets are given away."

"It shall be done," said the general. "It is very little to grant to one who has done as much as you."

A couple of days afterwards Colonel Charles Shackelford of the Confederate army was much surprised to receive a notice from General Joseph E. Johnston that he was wanted at headquarters.

He was more surprised upon his arrival there to have a letter placed in his hands which had been received under a flag of truce. The letter was from General Thomas, and stated that his daughter, Miss Kate Shackelford, was in Chattanooga, and that, if he desired, he could meet her under a flag of truce between the hours of one and two the next day.

"You would like to meet her?" said General Johnston, looking at him kindly.

"Meet her!" cried the father, his voice trembling. "Next to meeting my wife, it would be the greatest happiness that could be bestowed on me."

So it was arranged that Colonel Shackelford should meet his daughter.

When Kate was told what was in store for her she nearly went wild. She danced and shouted, and nearly smothered Fred with kisses, saying he was the dearest, dearest, and best cousin in the world.

"How about General Thomas?" asked Fred. "I could have done nothing without him."

"Oh! thank him, thank him," she cried. "Tell him how grateful I am for his kindness."

"You will think better of Yankees now, won't you, Kate?" asked Fred, a little mischievously.

Kate was taken aback a little, but soon rallied. "No," she replied; "the Yankees are a beggarly set. You are no Yankee; you are a Kentuckian. General Thomas is no Yankee; he is a Virginian. All the gentlemen in the Northern army are Southerners."

"Oh, Kate, Kate," laughed Fred, "you are incorrigible; there is no taming you."

The meeting between father and daughter was a most affectionate one. Colonel Shackelford folded Kate in his arms, and she wept tears of joy on his bosom. When the happiness of the first meeting was over, how Kate's tongue did run! She had so much to tell him of life in Nashville, what had happened since he left, that all he had to do was to listen, and that is what he wanted. He was hungry to hear from home, and he hung on every word Kate said. Of her playing the spy, her arrest and pardon, she said very little. But her father trembled as he heard, and whispered, "Oh, my daughter, how much you have dared and suffered for the South!"

"Never mind, father," Kate replied, with flashing eyes; "that hated flag will yet come down from the Capitol, see if it don't."

The hour was all too short, and when the moment for parting came Kate threw herself into her father's arms and sobbed: "Oh, father, when are you coming home? Mother's heart is breaking, and Bessie asks continually for you."

The eyes of the stern warrior grew moist. "My daughter surely," he said, "would not have me come until the South is free?"

"No, no, father," she cried, with vehemence, "but it is so hard—so hard!"

A few days afterwards Kate and Mabel returned to Nashville, and Fred accompanied them. But

before they left there was an important interview of which Fred knew nothing. The parties to the interview were Mabel Vaughn and Colonel Ainsworth. He had asked Mabel for a private meeting, and after many misgivings she had granted it. Kate's declaration that Ainsworth loved her was a surprise. She admired the gallant officer, knew how grievously he had been deceived by Kate, and pitied him. And pity, the poets say, "is akin to love." But Mabel thought her heart was buried in the grave with Marsden, and never could be resurrected. Yet, if what Kate said was true, it was her duty to undeceive Ainsworth and tell him there was no hope.

It was with a fluttering heart and flushed cheeks that Mabel met him.

"Miss Vaughn," Colonel Ainsworth began, hesitatingly, "before you return to Nashville there is something I want to say to you. You must have seen—know, that I love you."

Mabel held out her hands deprecatingly. "Don't, don't," she whispered. "I am so sorry. I never suspected it until a few days ago."

"Mabel—Miss Vaughn, I mean—I must speak," he replied. "I do not ask for your love; I am not worthy of it. When you know all you will despise me, but I want you to know."

"I will not listen to such talk," cried Mabel. "It is unworthy of you."

"Unworthy of me!" bitterly replied Ainsworth, "no it is not. I have been a traitor; I sold my

birthright. Before I met you I met and loved Kate Shackelford."

"Spare yourself that pitiful story, Colonel," broke in Mabel in a low voice. "I know all."

"What! of my infatuation and my dishonor?" he asked in a surprised tone.

"If infatuation you call it."

"But you cannot know," he cried, with vehemence, "how I betrayed my trust as a soldier."

"I know you trusted your honor, even your life, to the woman you loved. Could a man do more? I know that trust was betrayed."

"God knows," continued Ainsworth, "what I suffered when I knew I had been betrayed. I looked upon my idol as a beautiful demon."

"No, no; she is not that," said Mabel; "but her whole soul is bound up in the cause of the South. Do not judge her too harshly."

"I will not. I soon beheld a new phase of her character. When this girl, beautiful as an angel, with the face and many of the attributes of one, lied—lied to save my worthless life—I was dumfounded. I knew not what to think."

"It was her nobler self speaking," said Mabel.

"Then came what I thought to be a cruel sentence of death. I tried to speak; I tried to save her, but they tell me I burst a blood vessel and fell fainting."

"No wonder." Mabel's voice was full of sympathy.

"The agony of the awakening I can never tell.

I tried to tear her image from my heart. Even if she had relented, I could never marry a woman who had so deceived me. I prayed for death. The campaign of Stone River came. I arose from my bed against the earnest protest of my surgeon, and in the front of battle sought death. It fled from me. They called me brave; it was desperation. At last a bullet cruelly wounded, but did not kill. I was once more in a hospital, and Heaven sent you as nurse. My poor, wounded heart turned to you. I had to love—trust—or lose all confidence in womankind. In you I saw all that I had loved in Kate Shackelford—truth, purity, modesty, beauty, every attribute that makes woman lovable.”

Mabel’s head was bowed, and she was silently weeping. A great respect had crept into her heart for the man who had so opened his soul to her.

“Mabel—will you not let me call you that?” continued Ainsworth, pleadingly, “you have heard my miserable story. You know now why I cannot ask you to love me. I know your lover fell at Shiloh. But happy days may be in store for you. Captain Shackelford is worthy—”

“Stop!” swiftly cried Mabel. “There is nothing between Captain Shackelford and myself—never has been. When he rescued me from the mob he was a mere boy. I looked upon him as such. I was betrothed to another; this he knew. If he had been a little older—if I had not been betrothed to another—perhaps—perhaps it might have been different. As it is, our love for each other is as the

love of a brother and sister. It will never be more; I feel it—know it.”

Such a look of joy, of hope, came into Ainsworth's face that Mabel noticed it.

“Do not be deceived, Colonel Ainsworth,” she said. “Until now I have thought my heart would never love again—that it was buried with him who fell at Shiloh. I confess your words have strangely moved me; but it is to pity, not to love.”

“To be pitied by you is more than I deserve,” replied Ainsworth. “Mabel, you have given me hope. We both have our work to do now. If, when the war is over, our lives are spared, may I not come to you and tell you that I still love you? You may feel differently then.”

“Do not hope, Colonel Ainsworth; but if that time ever comes, you may return—not before. My answer, if my feelings do not change, will be ‘No.’ But I hardly know my own heart. Promise that you will not speak of this again until—until that time.”

“I promise,” solemnly said Ainsworth. “You have given me more happiness than I dared hope for. Until then, farewell,” and raising her hand gently to his lips, he pressed upon the trembling little fingers a kiss, and was gone.

And with him, almost unknown to her, went the heart of Mabel Vaughn.

The next day the little party took the cars for Nashville. Just as they were going Hugh drew Kate a little to one side and said, “Kate, you

don't hate Yankees as much as you pretend, do you?"

"Worse! worse!" answered Kate. "I shall hate them as long as I live."

"I don't care a snap," replied Hugh, "what you think of Yankees in general, but please omit one from your catalogue of enemies."

"Pray, what one should have that distinguished honor?" mockingly asked Kate.

"Your humble servant. Kate, you don't know how much I adore—"

For answer Hugh received a rousing slap on the cheek. "There, you saucy boy, don't you ever dare to speak so to me again. If you do, I shall never speak to you," and with flaming cheeks Kate walked back to her friends.

"What kind of a farewell do you call that?" asked Fred.

"Oh, it was one of Kate's love taps," ruefully answered Hugh.

"Love taps, indeed!" cried Kate. "It seems Captain Raymond is slow to comprehend."

"Well, good-bye, Kate; I forgive you this time, but I shall have my pay for that yet," said Hugh. "You know the old saying."

"Precious little good the old saying will do you." And Kate fled into the car.

At his aunt's home in Nashville Fred found a haven of rest, and rapidly recovered his health and strength. When the weather became warmer he visited his sister at school in Cincinnati.

He scarcely recognized the tall slight girl who threw herself in his arms, sobbing.

"Oh, Fred, Fred!" she said as she brushed away her tears; "why don't you and papa come home? When will this awful war be over? I am so unhappy."

Fred comforted her, and told her he hoped that they would soon be at home. "And until then, Belle," he said, "be a good girl, and study hard, so papa will be pleased when he gets home."

This Belle promised to do, and went back to her studies, comforted.

Fred then went to his old Kentucky home. John Stimson had performed wonders, and repaired much of the damage done by the armies under Bragg and Buell, but a great deal of the country still showed the desolation wrought by war. Soldiers were everywhere, and the inhabitants were more bitterly divided than ever. To make matters worse, guerilla bands infested the State, and preyed on friend and foe alike. It was with a sore heart that Fred viewed his once happy Kentucky.

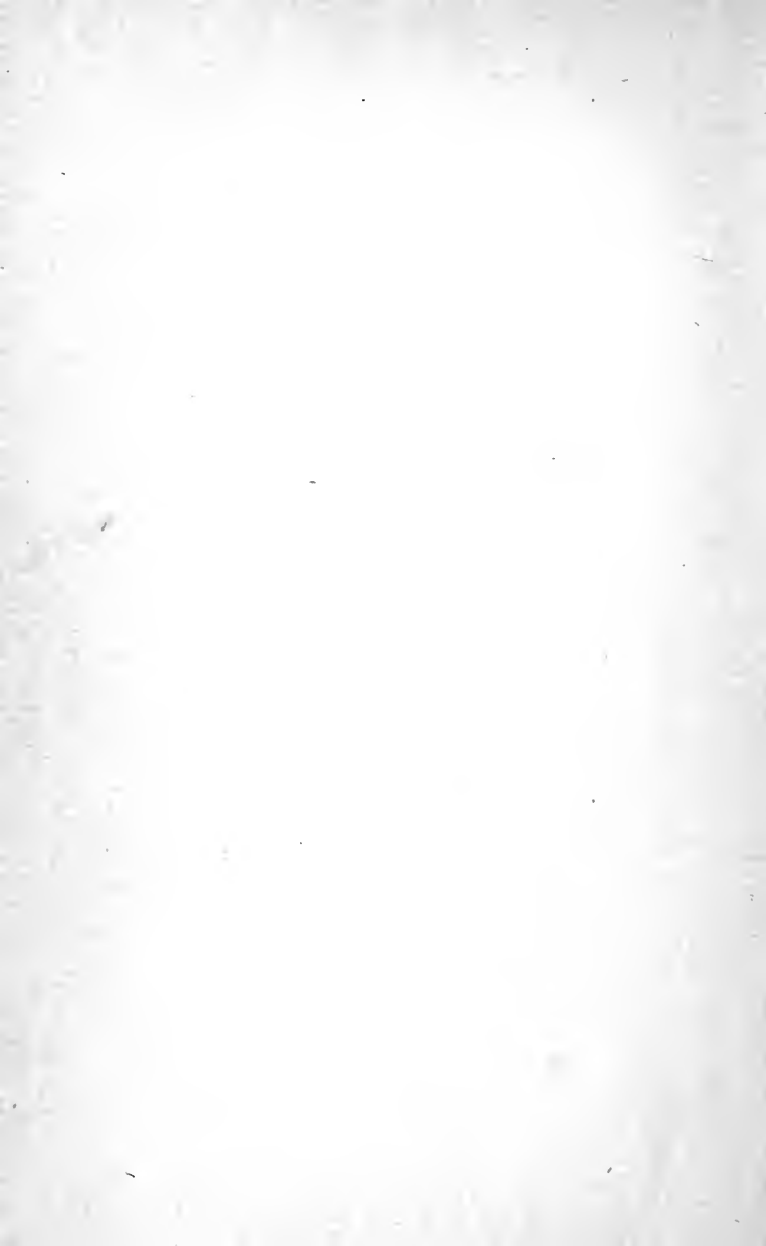
Before he left, Fred visited his mother's grave, and, with head pillowed on the sod which covered her, he poured out his tears and his prayers.

"Mother, mother," he sobbed, "I have kept my promise. I have been true to the old flag. But I am no longer the innocent boy you loved. My heart is hardened; my hands have been baptized in blood. Oh, mother! pity me, pity the nation!

How much longer must we tread the wine-press of God's wrath?"

Then there came to his heart a great calm, as if his mother had whispered in his ear: "My son, be comforted; the end draweth near. The time will soon come when the war clouds will be rolled away, and the North and South reunited in bonds of love stronger than ever before."

Fred arose, a great peace filling his heart, and he went back to his duty, strong, hopeful. In that mighty campaign in which Sherman swept from Chattanooga to Atlanta, and from Atlanta to the sea, he performed his part well.





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